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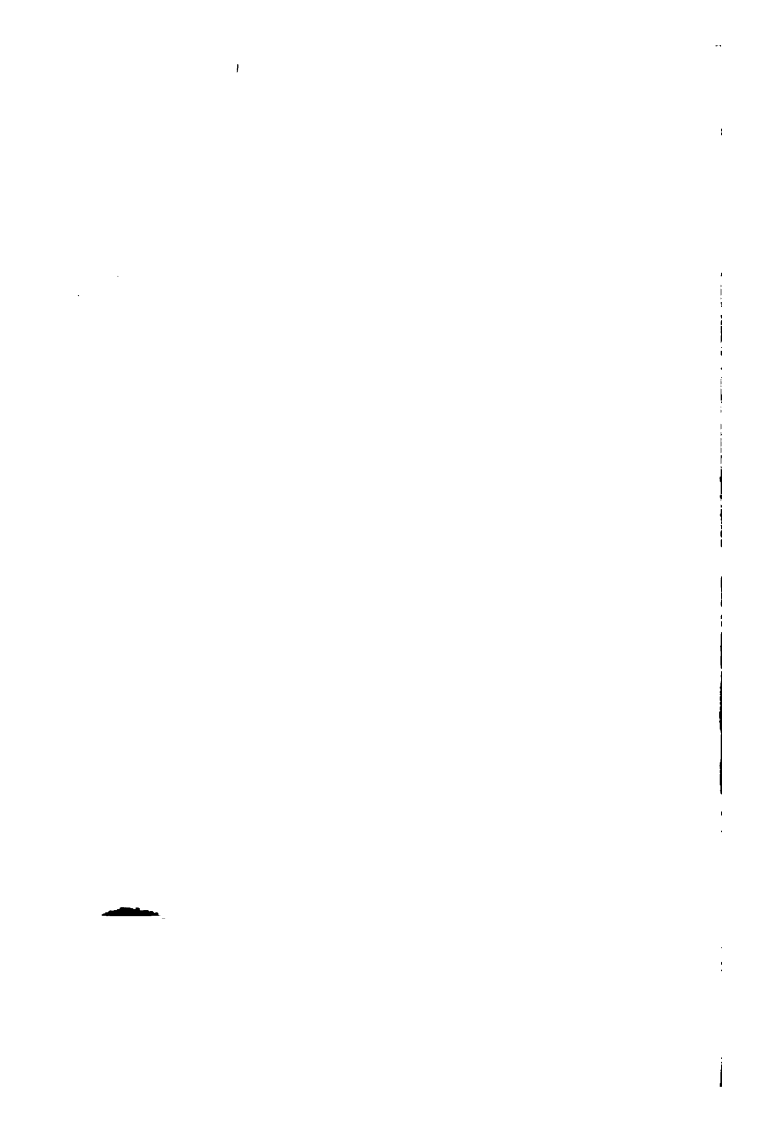
1817



ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS







CORIO LANUS.

B.9.

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CORIOLANUS

BY

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



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INTRODUCTION.

SHAKESPEARE'S *Coriolanus* was first printed in the folio of 1623, and is usually regarded as one of Shakespeare's latest plays. Edmond Malone ascribed it conjecturally to the year 1610. There is no evidence of a preceding play on the same subject by any other dramatist, and as *Coriolanus* was entered at Stationers' Hall on the 8th of November, 1623, to Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, printers of the first folio, as one of the copies that had not previously been "entered to other men," we know for certain that there had been no issue of this play in quarto. Shakespeare drew the story from no other source than Plutarch's Life of Coriolanus in Sir Thomas North's translation.

The shaping of the play is so contrived as to set forth most vividly the strength of our home ties. The bowing of the spirit of a proud, unconquerable warrior, impelled by the strongest of all other passions, to the love of wife, mother, and child, was the essential part of the old story. Shakespeare, who looked always for the soul of his play in that one of the elements of life which was especially concerned in its main action, made Coriolanus, like King Lear, an image of the transcendent power of those ties of nature by which God binds us together. In *Lear* the ties are broken: that way madness lies. In *Coriolanus* the ties hold: they are stronger than the strong man in

his wrath—stronger than death. The pride and passion of the mighty man of war are not the foremost features of the tale. The more Coriolanus is represented as the proud patrician, the fierce warrior whom nothing daunts, the more clearly is shown the power of that love which is strongest of all, as wholesome to us and familiar as the air we breathe. Shakespeare's first introduction of this power allies it to the daily life in all our homes: "Enter Volumnia and Virgilia, mother and wife to Martius: They set them downe on two lowe stooles and sowe."

| The First Act of the play opens with mutiny in Rome, and Caius Marcius regarded as chief enemy to the people. The voice of the Second Citizen represents a kindlier tone of consideration for his public service, but it is from the First Citizen, who loves him least, that there comes change of recognition of his home affection. "He pays himself with being proud . . . what he hath done famously, he did it to that end: though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud." After this opening sketch of the character of Coriolanus as seen through the distance between him and the people, whom he scorns, Menenius Agrippa, who is known for a peacemaker, enters upon the scene, with the good word of the Second Citizen, to which even the First Citizen assents. In the folios the numbering of the citizens, after the entrance of Menenius Agrippa, is reversed by an obvious error that was first corrected by Malone.

| Menenius Agrippa represents in the life of Coriolanus the man most beloved of all who are not bound to him by the domestic tie. He is the old family friend, who takes, as nearly as friend can, a father's place; with pride in

his son's successes, zeal to maintain his honour and prosperity, and joy in all signs of a love returned. Menenius Agrippa is, like Gonzalo in the *Tempest*, a good old statesman full of genial kindness, who believes in his friend, his dinner, and his joke, and has a generous fidelity that gives him influence and wins him trust. But these two kindly elders are well distinguished from each other. Menenius had more vigour to lead in service of the state, and a nature more lively in utterance. Gonzalo could not in a moment of delight cry "Hoo!" and throw his cap into the air. Menenius is a patrician with as much contempt of the populace as Coriolanus, but his contempt is mingled with the spirit of good-fellowship; he has no bitterness of scorn, but to citizens and tribunes speaks his ill-opinion of them with so much whimsical playfulness that they do not hold him for an enemy, however free the plainness of his speech. There is good-humour even in his wrath, and when he is sent back with a cracked heart to Rome, the old gleams of a kindly fancy play like household fire upon the ruin that shuts in his life. Menenius, when he comes among the mutinous plebeians, addresses them at once as his countrymen, as his good friends, his honest neighbours, wins their attention with a shrewdly applied fable, and then comes down with all his weight upon the leading malcontent as the great toe of the assembly, yet with a good-humour that can win friendly attention to the plainest speaking. Then Caius Marcius enters, and, in a tone sharpened by contrast with the manner of Menenius, pours his contempt upon the people with the bitter scorn that turns their hearts against him. In doing so he carries on the tale by reporting to Menenius the concession made to the other troop of mutineers who will have tribunes of their own choice "to defend their vulgar

wisdoms." The excess of his proud scorn is strongly marked—

"Would the nobility lay aside their ruth
And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry
With thousands of these quartered slaves, as high
As I could pick" (i.e. pitch) "my lance."

Here "quarry" is not derived from the word *quadratus*, squared, which gives its name to the place whence stones are cut, or to the square bolt shot from a crossbow; but it is from the French *cuir*, skin—a term of the chase. When the game was run down and killed, there was a regular form of distribution of the parts. The beast was skinned, and upon its thick skin—*cuir*—the meaner entrails were heaped up as the share of the dogs, who were let loose upon it. This was called in French the *curée*—in English adaptation of the word to English mouths, the "quarry." It was a *curée chaude* when given on the spot; a *curée froide* when prepared with bread and given in the kennel. There is uttermost contempt, therefore, in the comparison of quartered plebeians to this food for the dogs, the meanest entrails of the deer. Heart, liver, and kidneys were the umbles of the deer, which with the skin, head, chine, and shoulders were given to the keeper and his men. The venison pasty was served at the dais, the umble pie or humble pie at the servants' table, whence "eating humble pie" meant having taken a place at the servants' table. Caius Marcius did not look so high as the umbles for a parallel to the best flesh of the plebeians.

Let it be said here that the Coriolanus legend is ascribed to the year B.C. 490, about which time a temple is said to have been founded to "Fortuna Muliebris," Fortune of Women's Bringing. But there was a famine in the year

B.C. 470, and there were terms like those of Coriolanus between Romans and Volscians, B.C. 458. In the demands for tribunes and for corn at the beginning of the play, Shakespeare unites the story of the secession to the Sacred Mount provoked by the law of debts, with a later outbreak caused by the opposition of Coriolanus to the distribution of the contents of Sicilian corn-ships. In this way the poet gets a larger expression of the need of the great hungry mass—bread, and a voice to represent their claims on the attention of the rich. The action of the legend from which Shakespeare takes his play extends over six years. In the play all its events follow close on one another as parts of a single thought.

After the contempt poured by Caius Marcius upon the common people follows at once, through senators who enter with the generals Cominius and Titus Lartius, the knowledge that the Volscians are in arms, and that there is old rivalry in war between Caius Marcius and Aufidius, the Volscian leader. Caius Marcius goes to the war under the command of Cominius, leaving the sting behind him of his insolent contempt, resented by the tribunes of the people.

The scene changes to Corioli, showing the plans of the Volscians; on the side of Aufidius, also the rivalry between him and Marcius; and the resolve to give battle to the Romans in the open field while also defending the city against siege.

Now follows the scene with the women in the home of Marcius. Enter Volumnia and Virgilia. They sit down on two low stools and sew. Volumnia is the high-hearted Roman mother, Virgilia the tender-hearted Roman wife. The thoughts of both are on their absent warrior, the mother glorying in his glory, the wife overwrought with

cares about his safety. The talk is home talk. The lady Valeria enters as a friend and gossip; talk is of the child, of needlework, of visiting. Volumnia goes with Valeria to pay visits, but Virgilia is too anxious to go abroad. It would need little change to translate all into a home scene of this year 1892 among the ladies in the drawing-room. And simple and quiet as it all looks, here, in the heart of home, the power lies that saves a state, and is to that end stronger than armies or the shrewdest schemes of politicians.

Again Shakespeare uses the effect of contrast by passing from this picture of the women in the home to the most vivid painting of the men upon the field of battle. Marcius, in the attack upon Corioli, is shown, after battling single-handed within the gates suddenly closed on him, re-entering covered with blood, and, after the taking of Corioli, eager to rush at once into the other battle which is being fought, not far off, in the open field. Without rest, his brow covered with blood, he hurries to the fight in which Cominius, engaged with Aufidius, has withdrawn his force for rest. His eager question is: "Am I too late?" He leads chosen followers against Aufidius himself, and is victor in two battles, before, wounded and covered with the blood of enemies, he thinks of rest. Among these incidents the rivalry between Caius Marcius and Aufidius is shown with a fresh emphasis, and the nobler side of the proud spirit of Marcius appears in his impatience of the praise and the rewards that precede the conferring on him of the name of Coriolanus for what he did before Corioli. His generosity of nature also is associated with the incident that shows him at last faint from the long toil and loss of blood. And still the more the poet magnifies the

warrior's might, the more he magnifies God's gift of kindred love that is stronger than it all—the power of the women, who are no sword-bearers, but sit on their low stools and sew.

After this has been shown, the First Act ends with a scene in the camp of the Volscians, which points straight to the last scene of the play. In the rivalry between Coriolanus and Tullus Aufidius, we find Aufidius declaring that his

"Emulation

Hath not the honour in 't, it had ; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way ;
Or wrath or craft may get him."

We learn at the close of the First Act the temper of the rival at whose hearth Coriolanus will stand in the fifth scene of the Fourth Act, and by whose friends and with whose assent Coriolanus will be assassinated in the last scene of the play. At the close of the First Act, Aufidius says—

"Nor sleep, nor sanctuary,

Being naked, sick ; nor fane, nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests, nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius. Where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in 's heart."

In this way Shakespeare's plays, as those of any good dramatist needs must, abound in artistic foreshadowings and preparations for events to come.

The Second Act tells of the return of Coriolanus to Rome, and his election to the Consulship by voice of the

Senate ; and by the voices of the people, so contemptuously sought that, although given, with incitement from the tribunes, they are, at the close of the act, on the point of being revoked by the unstable crowd. In this act also, in the midst of the picturing of the proud spirit of Coriolanus, Shakespeare gives a central place to the ties of home. Volumnia is abroad, proud of his new achievements, to receive her son, impatient to meet him, as she tells her tidings of his triumph. "Good ladies, let's go.—Yes, yes, yes, the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name of the war." Virgilia is with Volumnia, and she is silent, anxious still with dread of hurt to him she loves ; and when Coriolanus enters, after short putting aside of the praise showered on him, all his care is for his mother and his wife, who meet him : and, giving a hand to each, it is between his wife and mother that he goes forward to the Capitol.

In the Third Act he and the tribunes who direct the people come into conflict, and this act ends with his banishment. When his stubborn spirit is shown in action, and the kindly old Menenius labours in all ways to pour oil over the stormy waters, and seeks to persuade Coriolanus to bear himself mildly, the influence of the mother over the son is made the foremost feature of the scene. Preparing for what is to follow, the act opens with note of the Volscos again making head. Coriolanus, in his high-handed dealing with the people, misses his mother's approbation :

"I muse my mother
Does not approve me farther."

The fierce warrior bears his mother's rebuke as if he were a child still at her knee. His spirit of scorn breaks

out while he is trying to obey his mother. "Pray be content," he had said to her,

"Mother, I am going to the market-place;
Chide me no more."

"I banish you," was his proud answer to the sentence of the people as he turned his back on Rome.

The Fourth Act shows Coriolanus followed out of Rome's gates by his old friend Menenius, his old general Cominius, and his wife and mother; the Volscians ready for a new attack; and Coriolanus, seeking vengeance by alliance with the enemies of Rome, stands at the hearth of Tullus Aufidius, his enemy as well as Rome's. That Aufidius received him cordially was due to two causes. The deep underlying sense of a great gain to be won by the aid of Coriolanus himself as an ally in war against the Romans would make his alliance welcome to the Volscian state; and a mere surface sense of the bold trust in his own generosity that prompted his enemy to put himself thus in his power, would stir for a time in Aufidius an answering emotion, altogether real and for the moment strong, though with no deep roots from which it could draw long continuance of life. It was planted rather in the soil of an old hatred which had lost all generosity of emulation, and in which the new emotion, however natural and honest, could not be sustained. The haughty spirit of Coriolanus would also make it difficult for any hatred in a rival's mind to remain long asleep. In the Fourth Act, while there is pale fear in Rome, the alliance of Coriolanus with the Volscians is established; but the last words express the danger from Aufidius, who says—

"When Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou'rt poor'st of all; then shortly thou art mine."

In the Fifth Act Coriolanus has Rome at his feet. His

old general, Cominius, has pleaded to him in vain. His old family friend, Menenius, persuaded to try his skill, and with a shrewd intention, after his own heart, of speaking to him when he has dined, is struck to the heart with a cold "Away!" followed by the declaration, "Wife, mother, child I know not."

But when wife, mother, and child come, it is in vain that he cries—

"Out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature break!
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate."

He melts to tenderness at his wife's gentle reverence—

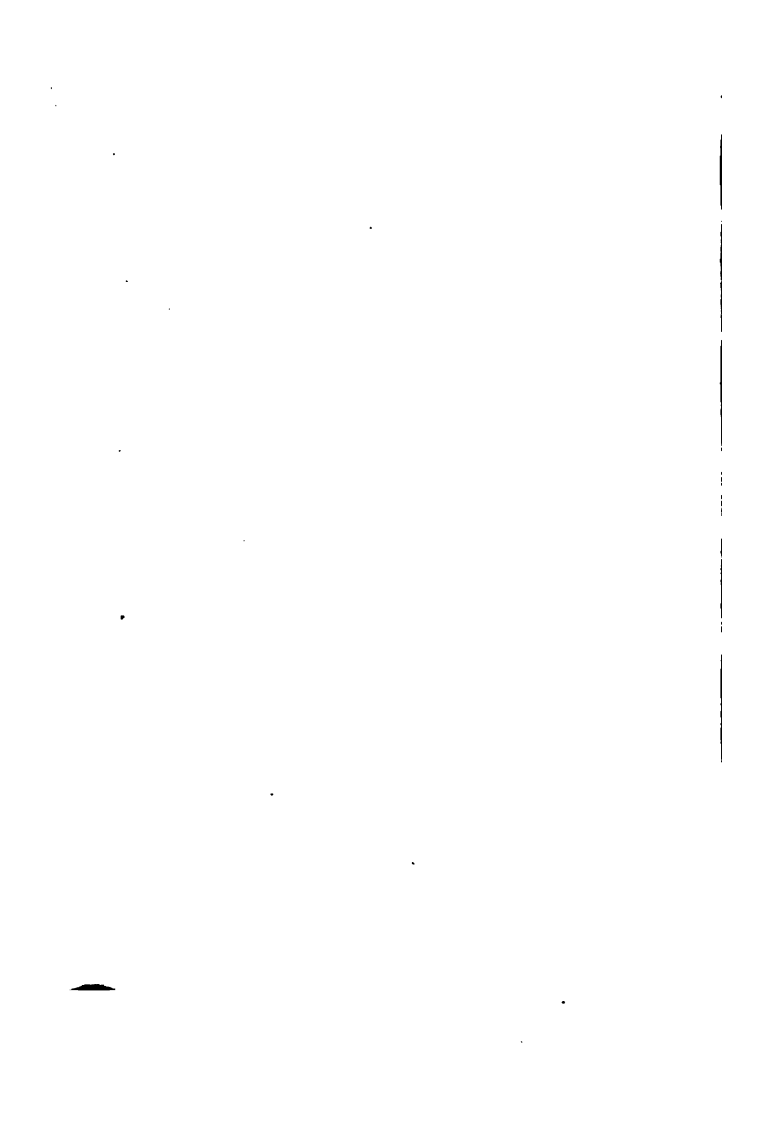
"What is that curt'sy worth? or those dove's eyes
Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others.—My mother bows
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod; and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession, which
Great Nature cries, 'Deny not.'—Let the Volscies
Plough Rome and harrow Italy; I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, *but stand*
As if a man were author of himself,
And knew no other kin."

But that is exactly what the play shows that a man cannot do. Thank God, these home-ties, of the love of God's own shaping for the help of man, are stronger than all evil passions, all brute forces of the world. Coriolanus yields to them, and in so doing shows them to be stronger than death: for he knows well that by his yielding, he places his life in the hands of his enemy. He cries—

"O mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene;
They laugh at.—Oh, my mother, mother! Oh,

You have won a happy victory to Rome ;
But for your son,—believe it, oh, believe it,—
Most dangerously you have with him prevailed,
If not most mortal to him. But let it come.

And he goes back, as by a soldier's honour he feels that
he must, with Aufidius, to be murdered in Corioli,
while Rome exults in her deliverance. H. M.



CORIOLANUS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CAIUS MARCIUS, afterwards CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS, a noble Roman.	Licutenant to Aufidius. Conspirators with Aufidius. A Citizen of Antium. Two Volscian Guards.
TITUS LARTIUS, } COMINIUS, } } <i>Generals</i> } <i>against the</i> } <i>Volscians.</i>	VOLUMNIA, Mother to Corio- lanus.
MENENIUS AGRIPPA, Friend to Coriolanus.	VIRGILIA, Wife to Coriolanus.
SICINIUS VELUTUS, } JUNIUS BRUTUS, } } <i>Tribunes</i> } <i>of the</i> } <i>people.</i>	VALERIA, Friend to Virgilia. Gentlewoman attending on Virgilia.
Young MARCIUS, Son to Co- riolanus.	Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Ædiles, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, Messen- gers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants.
A Roman Herald.	
TULLUS AUFIDIUS, General of the Volscians.	

SCENE.—Partly in ROME and its neighbourhood; partly
CORIOLI and its neighbourhood; and partly ANTIUM.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Rome. A Street.

*Enter a company of mutinous Citizens, with staves,
clubs, and other weapons.*

1 *Cit.* Before we proceed any further, hear me
speak.

All. Speak, speak.

1 *Cit.* You are all resolved rather to die than to
famish?

All. Resolved, resolved.

1 *Cit.* First, you know, Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

All. We know 't, we know 't.

1 *Cit.* Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is 't a verdict?

All. No more talking on 't ; let it be done : away, away !

2 *Cit.* One word, good citizens.

1 *Cit.* We are accounted poor citizens ; the patricians, good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us : if they would yield us but the superfluity, while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely ; but they think we are too dear : the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularise their abundance ; our sufferance is a gain to them. —Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes : for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.

2 *Cit.* Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius ?

All. Against him first : he's a very dog to the commonalty.

2 *Cit.* Consider you what services he has done for his country ?

1 *Cit.* Very well; and could be content to give him good report for't, but that he pays himself with being proud.

2 *Cit.* Nay, but speak not maliciously.

1 *Cit.* I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end: though soft con-scienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

2 *Cit.* What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.

1 *Cit.* If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition. [*Shouts within.*] What shouts are these? The other side o' the city is risen: why stay we prating here? to the Capitol!

All. Come, come.

1 *Cit.* Soft, who comes here?

2 *Cit.* Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always loved the people.

Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA.

1 *Cit.* He's one honest enough: would, all the rest were so!

Men. What work 's, my countrymen, in hand?

Where go you

With bats and clubs? The matter? Speak, I
pray you.

1 Cit. Our business is not unknown to the senate: they have had inkling, this fortnight, what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say, poor suitors have strong breaths: they shall know, we have strong arms too.

Men. Why, masters, my good friends, mine
honest neighbours,

Will you undo yourselves?

1 Cit. We cannot, sir; we are undone already.

Men. I tell you, friends, most charitable care
Have the patricians of you. For your wants,
Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well
Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift them
Against the Roman state, whose course will on
The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs
Of more strong link asunder than can ever
Appear in your impediment. For the dearth,
The gods, not the patricians, make it; and
Your knees to them, not arms, must help. Alack!
You are transported by calamity
Thither where more attends you; and you slander

The helms o' the state, who care for you like
fathers,

When you curse them as enemies.

1 *Cit.* Care for us !—True, indeed !—They ne'er
cared for us yet :—suffer us to famish, and their
store-houses crammed with grain ; make edicts for
usury, to support usurers ; repeal daily any whole-
some act established against the rich, and provide
more piercing statutes daily to chain up and
restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they
will ; and there's all the love they bear us.

Men. Either you must
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,
Or be accused of folly. I shall tell you .
A pretty tale : it may be, you have heard it ;
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To stale't a little more.

1 *Cit.* Well, I'll hear it, sir: yet you must not
think to fob off our disgrace with a tale : but, an't
please you, deliver.

Men. There was a time, when all the body's
members
Rebelled against the belly ; thus accused it :—
That only like a gulf it did remain
I' the midst o' the body, idle and unactive,
Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing

Like labour with the rest ; where th' other instruments

Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel
And, mutually participate, did minister
Unto the appetite and affection common
Of the whole body. The belly answered,—

1 *Cit.* Well, sir,

What answer made the belly ?

Men. Sir, I shall tell you.—With a kind of smile,

Which ne'er came from the lungs, but even thus—
For, look you, I may make the belly smile,
As well as speak—it tauntingly replied
To the discontented members, the mutinous parts
That envied his receipt ; even so most fitly
As you malign our senators, for that
They are not such as you.

1 *Cit.* Your belly's answer ? What !

The kingly-crownéd head, the vigilant eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps
In this our fabric, if that they—

Men.

What then ?—

Fore me, this fellow speaks !—What then ? what then ?

1 *Cit.* Should by the cormorant belly be restrained,

Who is the sink o' the body,—

Men.

Well, what then?

1 *Cit.* The former agents, if they did complain,
What could the belly answer?

Men.

I will tell you :

If you'll bestow a small—of what you have
little—

Patience awhile, you'll hear the belly's answer.

1 *Cit.* Ye're long about it.

Men.

Note me this, good friend ;

Your most grave belly was deliberate,

Not rash like his accusers, and thus answered :—

'True is it, my incorporate friends,' quoth he,

'That I receive the general food at first,

Which you do live upon ; and fit it is,

Because I am the store-house and the shop

Of the whole body : but, if you do remember,

I send it through the rivers of your blood,

Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the
brain ;

And, through the cranks and offices of man,

The strongest nerves, and small inferior veins,

From me receive that natural competency

Whereby they live ; and though that all at once,

You, my good friends,'—this says the belly, mark me,—

1 *Cit.* Ay, sir; well, well.

Men. 'Though all at once cannot
See what I do deliver out to each,
Yet I can make my audit up, that all
From me do back receive the flour of all,
And leave me but the bran.' What say you to 't?

1 *Cit.* It was an answer. How apply you this?

Men. The senators of Rome are this good belly,
And you the mutinous members: for examine
Their counsels and their cares; digest things
rightly,
Touching the weal o' the common, you shall find,
No public benefit which you receive
But it proceeds or comes from them to you,
And no way from yourselves.—What do you
think,—

You, the great toe of this assembly?

1 *Cit.* I the great toe? why the great toe?

Men. For that, being one o' the lowest, basest,
poorest,
Of this most wise rebellion, thou go'st foremost:
Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run,
Lead'st first to win some vantage.—
But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs:

Rome and her rats are at the point of battle ;
The one side must have bale.—

Enter CAIUS MARCIUS.

Hail, noble Marcius !

Mar. Thanks.—What's the matter, you dissen-
tious rogues,

That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs ?

1 Cit. We have ever your good word.

Mar. He that will give good words to thee, will
flatter

Beneath abhorring.—What would you have, you
curs,

That like nor peace, nor war ? the one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to
you,

Where he should find you lions, finds you hares ;

Where foxes, geese : you are no surer, no,

Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,

Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is,

To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,

And curse that justice did it.—Who deserves great-
ness

Deserves your hate ; and your affections are
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that

Which would increase his evil. He that depends
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead,
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye !

Trust ye ?

With every minute you do change a mind,
And call him noble that was now your hate,
Him vile that was your garland. What's the
matter,

That in these several places of the city
You cry against the noble senate, who,
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
Would feed on one another ?—What's their seeking ?

Men. For corn at their own rates ; whereof, they
say,

The city is well stored.

Mar. Hang 'em ! 'They say !'

They 'll sit by the fire, and presume to know
What's done i' the Capitol ; who's like to rise,
Who thrives, and who declines ; side factions, and
give out

Conjectural marriages ; making parties strong,
And feebling such as stand not in their liking
Below their cobbled shoes. 'They say' there's
grain enough !

Would the nobility lay aside their ruth,

And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry
With thousands of these quartered slaves, as high
As I could pick my lance.

Men. Nay, these are almost thoroughly persuaded ;

For though abundantly they lack discretion,
Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech
you,

What says the other troop ?

Mar. They are dissolved : hang 'em !
They said, they were an-hungry ; sighed forth
proverbs :

That hunger broke stone walls ; that dogs must
eat ;

That meat was made for mouths ; that the gods sent
not

Corn for the rich men only :—with these shreds
They vented their complainings ; which being
answered,

And a petition granted them, a strange one,—
To break the heart of generosity

And make bold power look pale,—they threw their
caps

As they would hang them on the horns o' the moon,
Shouting their emulation.

Men.

What is granted them ?

Mar. Five tribunes to defend their vulgar
wisdoms,

Of their own choice : one's Junius Brutus,
Sicinius Velutus, and I know not—'Sdeath !
The rabble should have first unroofed the city,
Ere so prevailed with me ; it will in time
Win upon power, and throw forth greater themes
For insurrection's arguing.

Men. This is strange.

Mar. Go ; get you home, you fragments !

Enter a Messenger, hastily.

Mess. Where's Caius Marcius ?

Mar. Here : what's the matter ?

Mess. The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

Mar. I am glad on't ; then we shall ha' means
to vent

Our musty superfluity.—See, our best elders.

*Enter COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, and other Senators ;
JUNIUS BRUTUS and SICINIUS VELUTUS.*

1 Sen. Marcius, 't is true that you have lately
told us,—

The Volsces are in arms.

Mar. They have a leader,

Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to't.

I sin in envying his nobility ;
And were I anything but what I am,
I'd wish me only he.

Com. You have fought together.

Mar. Were half to half the world by the ears,
and he

Upon my party, I'd revolt, to make
Only my wars with him : he is a lion
That I am proud to hunt.

1 *Sen.* Then, worthy Marcius,
Attend upon Cominius to these wars.

Com. It is your former promise.

Mar. Sir, it is ;
And I am constant.—Titus Lartius, thou
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.
What, art thou stiff? stand'st out?

Tit. No, Caius Marcius ;
I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t'other
Ere stay behind this business.

Men. O, true-bred !

1 *Sen.* Your company to the Capitol ; where, I
know,
Our greatest friends attend us.

Tit. [To COMINIUS.] Lead you on.—
[To MARCIUS.] Follow Cominius ; we must follow
you ;

Right worthy you priority.

Com.

Noble Marcius!

1 *Sen.* [*To the Citizens.*] Hence to your homes;
be gone!

Mar.

Nay, let them follow:

The Volsces have much corn; take these rats
thither

To gnaw their garners.—Worshipful mutiners,
Your valour puts well forth; pray, follow.

[*Exeunt all except BRUTUS and SICINIUS*

The Citizens steal away.

Sic. Was ever man so proud as is this Marcius?

Bru. He has no equal.

Sic. When we were chosen tribunes for the
people,—

Bru. Marked you his lip and eyes?

Sic.

Nay, but his taunts.

Bru. Being moved, he will not spare to gird the
gods.

Sic. Bemock the modest moon.

Bru. The present wars devour him! he is
grown

Too proud to be so valiant.

Sic.

Such a nature,

Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow
Which he treads on at noon. But I do wonder

His insolence can brook to be commanded
Under Cominius.

Bru. Fame, at the which he aims,—
In whom already he's well graced,—cannot
Better be held, nor more attained, than by
A place below the first ; for what miscarries
Shall be the general's fault, though he perform
To the utmost of a man ; and giddy censure
Will then cry out of Marcius, 'O, if he
Had borne the business !'

Sic. Besides, if things go well,
Opinion, that so sticks on Marcius, shall
Of his demerits rob Cominius.

Bru. True :
Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius,
Though Marcius earned them not ; and all his faults
To Marcius shall be honours, though, indeed,
In aught he merit not.

Sic. Let's hence and hear
How the despatch is made ; and in what fashion,
More than his singularity, he goes
Upon his present action.

Bru. Let's along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Corioli. The Senate-house.

Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS and Senators.

1 *Sen.* So your opinion is, Aufidius,
That they of Rome are entered in our counsels
And know how we proceed.

Auf.

Is it not yours ?

What ever hath been thought on in this state,
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome
Had circumvention ? 'Tis not four days gone
Since I heard thence ; these are the words : I think
I have the letter here ; yes, here it is :—

[*Reads*] *'They have pressed a power, but it is not
known*

*Whether for east or west. The dearth is great ;
The people mutinous ; and it is rumoured,
Cominius, Marcius your old enemy,—
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,—
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,
These three lead on this preparation
Whither 't is bent : most likely 't is for you.
Consider of it.'*

1 *Sen.* Our army's in the field :
We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready
To answer us.

Auf. Nor did you think it folly
To keep your great pretences veiled till when
They needs must show themselves; which in the
hatching,

It seemed, appeared to Rome. By the discovery
We shall be shortened in our aim; which was,
To take in many towns, ere, almost, Rome
Should know we were afoot.

2 *Sen.* Noble Aufidius,
Take your commission; hie you to your bands;
Let us alone to guard Corioli:
If they set down before 's, for the remove
Bring up your army; but I think you'll find
They've not prepared for us.

Auf. O, doubt not that;
I speak from certainties. Nay, more,
Some parcels of their power are forth already,
And only hitherward. I leave your honours.
If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,
'T is sworn between us, we shall ever strike
Till one can do no more.

All. The gods assist you!

Auf. And keep your honours safe!

1 *Sen.* Farewell.

2 *Sen.* Farewell.

All. Farewell. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—Rome. A Room in MARCIUS' House.

Enter VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA : they sit down on two low stools, and sew.

Vol. I pray you, daughter, sing ; or express yourself in a more comfortable sort : if my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour, than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied, and the only son of my womb ; when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way ; when, for a day of kings' entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding ; I,—considering how honour would become such a person ; that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir,—was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him ; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

Vir. But had he died in the business, madam,—how then ?

Vol. Then his good report should have been my

son ; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely, had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather have eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

Enter a Gentlewoman.

Gent. Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

Vir. Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself.

Vol. Indeed, you shall not.

Methinks, I hear hither your husband's drum,
I see him pluck Aufidius down by the hair ;
As children from a bear, the Volscres slunning him :
Methinks, I see him stamp thus, and call thus,—
' Come on, you cowards ! you were got in fear,
Though you were born in Rome : ' his bloody brow
With his mailed hand then wiping, forth he goes,
Like to a harvest-man, that's tasked to mow
Or all, or lose his hire.

Vir. His bloody brow ! O Jupiter, no blood !

Vol. Away, you fool ! it more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy : the breasts of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, looked not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood
At Grecian swords, contemning.—Tell Valeria,

We are fit to bid her welcome. [*Exit Gentlewoman.*

Vir. Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius !

Vol. He 'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee,
And tread upon his neck.

Re-enter Gentlewoman, with VALERIA and an Usher.

Val. My ladies both, good day to you.

Vol. Sweet madam.

Vir. I am glad to see your ladyship.

Val. How do you both ? you are manifest house-keepers. What are you sewing here ? A fine spot, in good faith.—How does your little son ?

Vir. I thank your ladyship, well, good madam.

Vol. He had rather see the swords, and hear a drum, than look upon his schoolmaster.

Val. O' my word, the father's son ; I 'll swear 't is a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon him o' Wednesday half an hour together : he has such a confirmed countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly ; and when he caught it, he let it go again ; and after it again ; and over and over he comes, and up again, caught it again : or whether his fall enraged him, or how 't was, he did so set his teeth, and tear it ; O, I warrant, how he mammocked it !

Vol. One of his father's moods.

Val. Indeed, la, 't is a noble child.

Vir. A crack, madam.

Val. Come, lay aside your stitchery ; I must have you play the idle huswife with me this afternoon.

Vir. No, good madam ; I will not out of doors.

Val. Not out of doors !

Vol. She shall, she shall.

Vir. Indeed, no, by your patience ; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.

Vol. Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably. Come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

Vir. I will wish her speedy strength, and visit her with my prayers ; but I cannot go thither.

Vol. Why, I pray you ?

Vir. 'T is not to save labour, nor that I want love.

Val. You would be another Penelope : yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths. Come ; I would, your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you shall go with us.

Vir. No, good madam, pardon me ; indeed, I will not forth.

Val. In truth, la, go with me ; and I'll tell you excellent news of your husband.

Vir. O, good madam, there can be none yet.

Val. Verily, I do not jest with you ; there came news from him last night.

Vir. Indeed, madam ?

Val. In earnest, it's true ; I heard a senator speak it. Thus it is :—The Volsces have an army forth, against whom Cominius the general is gone, with one part of our Roman power : your lord, and Titus Lartius, are set down before their city Corioli ; they nothing doubt prevailing, and to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour ; and so, I pray, go with us.

Vir. Give me excuse, good madam ; I will obey you in everything hereafter.

Vol. Let her alone, lady : as she is now, she will but disease our better mirth.

Val. In troth, I think she would. — Fare you well then. — Come, good sweet lady.—Pr'ythee, Virgilia, turn thy solemnness out o' door, and go along with us.

Vir. No, at a word, madam ; indeed, I must not. I wish you much mirth.

Val. Well, then, farewell,

[*Exeunt*,

SCENE IV.—Before Corioli.

*Enter, with drum and colours, MARCIUS, TITUS
LARTIUS, Officers, and Soldiers.*

Mar. Yonder comes news :—a wager, they have met,

Lart. My horse to yours, no.

Mar. "T is done.

Lart. Agreed.

Enter a Messenger.

Mar. Say, has our general met the enemy ?

Mess. They lie in view, but have not spoke as yet.

Lart. So, the good horse is mine.

Mar. I 'll buy him of you.

Lart. No, I 'll nor sell nor give him : lend you him I will,

For half a hundred years.—Summon the town.

Mar. How far off lie these armies ?

Mess. Within this mile and half.

Mar. Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours.

Now, Mars, I pr'ythee, make us quick in work,
That we with smoking swords may march from
hence

To help our fielded friends!—Come, blow thy blast.

A parley sounded. Enter, on the walls, some Senators and others.

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

1 *Sen.* No, nor a man that fears you less than he,

That's lesser than a little. [*Drums afar off.*]

Hark, our drums

Are bringing forth our youth: we'll break our walls

Rather than they shall pound us up. Our gates,
Which yet seem shut, we have but pinned with
rushes;

They'll open of themselves. [*Alarum afar off.*]

Hark you, far off;

There is Aufidius: list, what work he makes
Amongst your cloven army.

Mar. O, they are at it!

Lart. Their noise be our instruction.—Ladders,
ho!

The Volces enter and pass over.

Mar. They fear us not, but issue forth their
city.

Now put your shields before your hearts, and
fight

With hearts more proof than shields.—Advance,
brave Titus :

They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,
Which makes me sweat with wrath.—Come on,
my fellows :

He that retires, I'll take him for a Volsce,
And he shall feel mine edge.

Alarum, and exeunt Romans and Volsces, fighting.

The Romans are beaten back to their trenches.

Re-enter MARCIUS.

Mar. All the contagion of the south light on
you,
You shames of Rome ! you herd of—Boils and
plagues

Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorred
Further than seen, and one infect another
Against the wind a mile ! You souls of geese
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run
From slaves that apes would beat ! Pluto and hell !
All hurt behind ; backs red, and faces pale
With flight and agued fear ! Mend, and charge
home,

Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe,

And make my wars on you : look to 't ; come on ;
If you 'll stand fast, we 'll beat them to their wives,
As they us to our trenches. Follow me.

Another alarum. The Volsces and Romans re-enter, and the fight is renewed. The Volsces retire into Corioli, and MARCIUS follows them to the gates.

So, now the gates are ope :—now prove good seconds ;

'T is for the followers fortune widens them,
Not for the fliers : mark me, and do the like.

[He enters the gates, and is shut in.

1 *Sol.* Fool-hardiness ; not I.

2 *Sol.* Nor I.

3 *Sol.* See, they have shut him in.

[Alarum continues.

All. To the pot, I warrant him.

Enter TITUS LARTIUS.

Lart. What is become of Marcius ?

All. Slain, sir, doubtless.

1 *Sol.* Following the fliers at the very heels,
With them he enters ; who, upon the sudden,
Clapped-to their gates : he is himself alone,
To answer all the city.

Lart. O noble fellow !
Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,
And, when it bows, stands up. Thou art lost,
Marcius :

A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,
Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible
Only in strokes ; but, with thy grim looks and
The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds,
Thou mad'st thine enemies shake, as if the world
Were feverous and did tremble.

*Re-enter MARCIUS, bleeding, assaulted by the
enemy.*

1 *Sol.* Look, sir !

Lart. O, 't is Marcius !

Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.

[They fight, and all enter the city.]

SCENE V.—Within Corioli. A Street.

Enter certain Romans, with spoils.

1 *Rom.* This will I carry to Rome.

2 *Rom.* And I this.

3 *Rom.* A-murRAIN on't ! I took this for silver.

[Alarum continues still afar off.]

Enter MARCIUS and TITUS LARTIUS, with a trumpet.

Mar. See here these movers that do prize their
hours

At a cracked drachm ! Cushions, leaden spoons,
Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would
Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up—down with
them !—

And hark, what noise the general makes !—To
him !

There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,
Piercing our Romans : then, valiant Titus, take
Convenient numbers to make good the city,
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will
haste

To help Cominius.

Lart. Worthy sir, thou bleed'st ;
Thy exercise hath been too violent
For a second course of fight.

Mar. Sir, praise me not ;
My work hath yet not warmed me. Fare you
well.

The blood I drop is rather physical
Than dangerous to me. To Aufidius thus

I will appear, and fight.

Lart. Now the fair goddess, Fortune,
Fall deep in love with thee ; and her great charms
Misguide thy opposers' swords ! Bold gentleman,
Prosperity be thy page !

Mar. Thy friend ; no less
Than those she placeth highest ! So, farewell.

Lart. Thou worthiest Marcius !—

[*Exit MARCIUS.*

Go, sound thy trumpet in the market-place ;
Call thither all the officers o' the town,
Where they shall know our mind : away !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—Near the Camp of Cominius.

Enter COMINIUS and Forces, as in retreat.

Com. Breathe you, my friends : well fought ; we
are come off

Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands
Nor cowardly in retire : believe me, sirs,
We shall be charged again. Whiles we have
struck,

By interims and conveying gusts we have heard
The charges of our friends.—Ye Roman gods,

Lead their successes as we wish our own,
That both our powers, with smiling fronts en-
countering,
May give you thankful sacrifice!—

Enter a Messenger.

Thy news?

Mess. The citizens of Corioli have issued,
And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle :
I saw our party to their trenches driven,
And then I came away.

Com. Though thou speak'st truth,
Methinks, thou speak'st not well. How long is 't
since?

Mess. Above an hour, my lord.

Com. 'T is not a mile ; briefly we heard their
drums :

How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour,
And bring thy news so late ?

Mess. Spies of the Volsces
Held me in chase, that I was forced to wheel
Three or four miles about ; else had I, sir,
Half an hour since brought my report.

Enter MARCIUS.

Com. Who's yonder,
That does appear as he were slayed ? O gods !

He has the stamp of Marcius ; and I have
Before-time seen him thus.

Mar. Come I too late ?

Com. The shepherd knows not thunder from a
tabor,
More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue
From every meaner man.

Mar. Come I too late ?

Com. Ay, if you come not in the blood of
others,
But mantled in your own.

Mar. O, let me clip you
In arms as sound as when I woo'd ; in heart
As merry as when our nuptial day was done,
And tapers burned to bedward.

Com. Flower of warriors.
How is't with Titus Lartius ?

Mar. As with a man busied about decrees :
Condemning some to death, and some to exile ;
Ransoming him, or pitying, threatening the other ,
Holding Corioli in the name of Rome,
Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,
To let him slip at will.

Com. Where is that slave
Which told me they had beat you to your trenches ?
Where is he ? call him hither.

Mar. Let him alone ;
He did inform the truth : but for our gentlemen,
The common file—a plague !—tribunes for them !—
The mouse ne'er shunned the cat as they did
budge
From rascals worse than they.

Com. But how prevailed you ?

Mar. Will the time serve to tell ? I do not
think.

Where is the enemy ? are you lords o' the field ?
If not, why cease you till you are so ?

Com. *Marcus,*
We have at disadvantage fought, and did
Retire to win our purpose.

Mar. How lies their battle ? know you on
which side

They have placed their men of trust ?

Com. As I guess, *Marcus,*
Their bands i' the vaward are the Antiates,
Of their best trust ; o'er them Aufidius,
Their very heart of hope.

Mar. I do beseech you,
By all the battles wherein we have fought,
By the blood we have shed together, by the vows
We have made to endure friends, that you directly
Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates ;

Though thanks to all, must I select from all : the
rest

Shall bear the business in some other fight,
As cause will be obeyed. Please you to march ;
And four shall quickly draw out my command,
Which men are best inclined.

Com. March on, my fellows :
Make good this ostentation, and you shall
Divide in all with us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—The Gates of Corioli.

TITUS LARTIUS, *having set a guard upon Corioli,
going with a drum and trumpet toward
COMINIUS and CAIUS MARCIUS, enters with a
Lieutenant, a party of Soldiers, and a Scout.*

Lart. So ; let the ports be guarded : keep your
duties,
As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch
Those centuries to our aid ; the rest will serve
For a short holding : if we lose the field,
We cannot keep the town.

Lieu. Fear not our care, sir.

Lart. Hence, and shut your gates upon 's.—
Our guider, come ; to the Roman camp conduct
us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—A Field of Battle between the
Roman and the Volscian Camps.

Alarum. Enter MARCIUS and AUFIDIUS.

Mar. I'll fight with none but thee ; for I do
hate thee

Worse than a promise-breaker.

Auf. We hate alike :

Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor

More than thy fame I envy. Fix thy foot.

Mar. Let the first budger die the other's slave,
And the gods doom him after !

Auf. If I fly, Marcius,

Halloo me like a hare.

Mar. Within these three hours, Tullus,
Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,
And made what work I pleased ; 't is not my
blood

Wherein thou seest me masked : for thy revenge
Wrench up thy power to the highest.

Auf. Wert thou the Hector
That was the whip of your bragged progeny,
Thou shouldst not scape me here.—

[*They fight, and certain Volscies come to
the aid of AUFIDIUS.*

Marcius :

Officious, and not valiant,—you have shamed me
In your condemnéd seconds.

[*Exeunt fighting, driven in by MARCIUS.*

SCENE IX.—The Roman Camp.

Alarum. A retreat sounded. Flourish. Enter from one side, COMINIUS and Romans ; from the other side, MARCIUS, with his arm in a scarf, and other Romans.

Com. If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's
work,

Thou 'lt not believe thy deeds : but I'll report it
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles ;
Where great patricians shall attend, and shrug,
I' the end admire ; where ladies shall be frightened,
And, gladly quaked, hear more ; where the dull
tribunes,

That, with the fusty plebeians, hate thine honours,
Shall say, against their hearts,—

'We thank thé gods, our Rome hath such a
soldier !'—

Yet cam'st thou to a morsel of this feast,
Having fully dined before.

*Enter TITUS LARTIUS, with his Power, from the
pursuit.*

Lart.

O general,

Here is the steed, we the caparison :

Hadst thou beheld—

Mar.

Pray now, no more ; my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me, grieves me. I have
done

As you have done,—that's what I can ; induced

As you have been,—that's for my country :

He that has but effected his good will

Hath overta'en mine act.

Com.

You shall not be

The grave of your deserving ; Rome must know

The value of her own : 't were a concealment

Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,

To hide your doings ; and to silence that

Which, to the spire and top of praises vouched,

Would seem but modest. Therefore, I beseech

you,—

In sign of what you are, not to reward

What you have done,—before our army hear me.

Mar. I have some wounds upon me, and they
smart

To hear themselves remembered.

Com. Should they not,
Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude,
And tent themselves with death. Of all the
horses—

Whereof we have ta'en good, and good store,—
of all

The treasure, in this field achieved and city,
We render you the tenth ; to be ta'en forth,
Before the common distribution, at
Your only choice.

Mar. I thank you, general,
But cannot make my heart consent to take
A bribe to pay my sword : I do refuse it ;
And stand upon my common part with those
That have beheld the doing.

*[A long flourish. They all cry, "MAR-
CIUS ! MARCIUS !" cast up their caps
and lances. COMINIUS and LARTIUS
stand bare.]*

Mar. May these same instruments, which you
profane,
Never sound more ! When drums and trumpets
shall
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be
Made all of false-faced soothing ! When steel
grows

Soft as the parasite's silk, let him be made
An ^coverture for the wars! No more, I say.
For that I have not washed my nose that bled,
Or foiled some debile wretch, which, without
note,

Here's many else have done, you shout me forth
In acclamations hyperbolical;
As if I loved my little should be dieted
In praises sauced with lies.

Com.

Too modest are you,
More cruel to your good report, than grateful
To us that give you truly. By your patience,
If 'gainst yourself you be incensed, we'll put
you—

Like one that means his proper harm—in manacles,
Then reason safely with you.—Therefore, be it
known,

As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius
Wears this war's garland: in token of the which
My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,
With all his trim belonging; and, from this
time,

For what he did before Corioli, call him,
With all the applause and clamour of the host,
CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS.—Bear
The addition nobly ever!

All. Caius Marcius Coriolanus !

[*Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums.*]

Cor. I will go wash ;

And when my face is fair, you shall perceive
Whether I blush or no : howbeit, I thank you.—
I mean to stride your steed ; and, at all times,
To undercrest your good addition
To the fairness of my power.

Com. So, to our tent ;
Where, ere we do repose us, we will write
To Rome of our success.—You, Titus Lartius,
Must to Corioli back : send us to Rome
The best with whom we may articulate,
For their own good, and ours.

Lart. I shall, my lord.

Cor. The gods begin to mock me. I, that now
Refused most princely gifts, am bound to beg
Of my lord general.

Com. Take it : 't is yours—What is 't ?

Cor. I sometime lay, here in Corioli,
At a poor man's house ; he used me kindly :—
He cried to me ; I saw him prisoner ;
But then Aufidius was within my view,
And wrath o'erwhelmed my pity. I request you
To give my poor host freedom.

Com. O, well begged !

Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

Lart. Marcius, his name?

Cor. By Jupiter, forgot!—

I am weary; yea, my memory is tired.—

Have we no wine here?

Com. Go we to our tent.

The blood upon your visage dries; 't is time

It should be looked to: come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE X.—The Camp of the Volsces.

*A Flourish. Cornets. Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS,
bloody, with two or three Soldiers.*

Auf. The town is ta'en!

1 *Sold.* 'T will be deliver'd back on good condition.

Auf. Condition!—

I would I were a Roman; for I cannot,
Being a Volscé, be that I am.—Condition!

What good condition can a treaty find

I' the part that is at mercy?—Five times, Marcius,
I've fought with thee: so often hast thou beat
me;

And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter
As often as we eat.—By the elements,
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,
He is mine, or I am his. Mine emulation
Hath not that honour in 't, it had; for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way,
Or wrath or craft may get him.

1 *Sold.* He's the devil.

Auf. Bolder, though not so subtle. My valour,
poisoned

With only suffering stain by him, for him
Shall fly out of itself. Nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick; nor fane nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
My hate to Marcius: where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in 's heart. Go you to the
city;
Learn how 't is held; and what they are that
must
Be hostages for Rome.

1 *Sold.*

Will not you go?

Auf. I am attended at the cypress grove : I
pray you,—

'T is south the city mills,—bring me word thither
How the world goes, that to the pace of it
I may spur on my journey.

I Sold.

I shall, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Rome. A Public Place.

Enter MENENIUS, SICINIUS, and BRUTUS.

Men. The augurer tells me we shall have news
to-night.

Bru. Good, or bad ?

Men. Not according to the prayer of the people,
for they love not Marcius.

Sic. Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

Men. Pray you, who does the wolf love ?

Sic. The lamb.

Men. Ay, to devour him ; as the hungry ple-
beians would the noble Marcius.

Bru. He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

Men. He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb.
You two are old men : tell me one thing that I
shall ask you.

Both Trib. Well, sir.

Men. In what enormity is Marcius poor in, that you two have not in abundance ?

Bru. He's poor in no one fault, but stored with all.

Sic. Especially in pride.

Bru. And topping all others in boasting.

Men. This is strange now. Do you two know how you are censured here in the city, I mean of us o' the right-hand file ? do you ?

Both Trib. Why, how are we censured ?

Men. Because you talk of pride now,—will you not be angry ?

Both Trib. Well, well, sir ; well.

Men. Why, 't is no great matter ; for a very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience : give your dispositions the reins, and be angry at your pleasures ; at the least, if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You blame Marcius for being proud ?

Bru. We do it not alone, sir.

Men. I know, you can do very little alone ; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrous single : your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride : O, that you could turn your eyes toward

the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves ! O, that you could ! .

Bru. What then, sir ?

Men. Why, then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools, as any in Rome.

Sic. Menenius, you are known well enough too.

Men. I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in 't ; said to be something imperfect, in favouring the first complaint—hasty, and tinder-like, upon too trivial motion ; one that converses more with the buttock of the night, than with the forehead of the morning : what I think, I utter, and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such weals-men as you are—I cannot call you Lycurguses—if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I can't say, your worships have delivered the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables ; and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it, that I am 'known well enough too' ? What harm can your

bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be 'known well enough too'?

Bru. Come, sir, come, we know you well enough.

Men. You know neither me, yourselves, nor anything. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs : you wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller, and then rejourn the controversy of threepence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers, set up the bloody flag against all patience, and, in roaring for a chamber-pot, dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing : all the peace you make in their cause is, calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones.

Bru. Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary benchman in the Capitol.

Men. Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards ; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be entombed in

an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying, Marcius is proud ; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion, though, peradventure, some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships : more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians : I will be bold to take my leave of you.

[BRUTUS and SICINIUS retire to the
back of the scene.

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and VALERIA, &c.

How now, my as fair as noble ladies—and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler—whither do you follow your eyes so fast ?

Vol. Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius approaches ; for the love of Juno, let's go.

Men. Ha ! Marcius coming home ?

Vol. Ay, worthy Menenius ; and with most prosperous approbation.

Men. Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee.—
Ho ! Marcius coming home !

Vir., Val. Nay, 't is true.

Vol. Look, here's a letter from him : the state hath another, his wife another ; and, I think, there's one at home for you.

Men. I will make my very house reel to-night :
—a letter for me !

Vir. Yes, certain, there's a letter for you ; I
saw it.

Men. A letter for me ! It gives me an estate
of seven years' health ; in which time I will make
a lip at the physician : the most sovereign prescrip-
tion in Galen is but empiricuteic, and, to this pre-
servative, of no better report than a horse-drench.
Is he not wounded ? he was wont to come home
wounded.

Vir. O, no, no, no.

Vol. O, he is wounded,—I thank the gods for 't.

Men. So do I too, if it be not too much.—
Brings 'a victory in 's pocket, the wounds become
him.

Vol. On 's brows, Menenius : he comes the third
time home with the oaken garland.

Men. Has he disciplined Aufidius soundly ?

Vol. Titus Lartius writes, they fought together,
but Aufidius got off.

Men. And 't was time for him too, I'll warrant
him that : an he had stayed by him, I would not
have been so fidiused for all the chests in Corioli,
and the gold that's in them. Is the senate pos-
sessed of this ?

Vol. Good ladies, let's go.—Yes, yes, yes; the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the whole name of the war: he bath in this action outdone his former deeds doubly.

Val. In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.

Men. Wondrous! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

Vir. The gods grant them true!

Vol. True! pow, wow.

Men. True! I'll be sworn they are true—Where is he wounded?—[*To the Tribunes.*] God save your good worships! Marcius is coming home: he has more cause to be proud.—Where is he wounded?

Vol. I' the shoulder, and i' the left arm: there will be large cicatrices to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body.

Men. One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh,—there's nine that I know.

Vol. He had, before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him.

Men. Now it's twenty-seven: every gash was an enemy's grave. [*A shout and flourish.*] Hark! the trumpets.

Vol. These are the ushers of Marcius : before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears :

Death, that dark spirit, in 's nervy arm doth lie,
Which, being advanced, declines, and then men die.

*A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter COMINIUS and
TITUS LARTIUS ; between them, CORIOLANUS, ..
crowned with an oaken garland, with Captains,
Soldiers, and a Herald.*

Her. Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did
fight

Within Corioli gates : where he hath won,
With fame, a name to Caius Marcius ; these
In honour follows, Caius Marcius—

Coriolanus !

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus !

[*Flourish*

All. Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus !

Cor. No more of this, it does offend my heart ;
Pray now, no more.

Com. Look, sir, your mother !

Cor. O,

You have, I know, petitioned all the gods

For my prosperity. [*Kneels.*

Vol. Nay, my good soldier, up ;

My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and
By deed-achieving honour newly named,—
What is it?—Coriolanus must I call thee?—
But, O, thy wife—

Cor. My gracious silence, hail !
Would'st thou have laughed had I come confined
home,
That weep'st to see me triumph ! Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.

Men. Now the gods crown thee !

Cor. And live you yet?—[*To VALERIA.*] O my
sweet lady, pardon.

Vol. I know not where to turn :—O, welcome
home ;
And welcome, general ; and ye 're welcome all.
Men. A hundred thousand welcomes : I could
weep,
And I could laugh ; I am light and heavy.
Welcome !

A curse begin at very root on 's heart
That is not glad to see thee !—You are three .
That Rome should dote on ; yet, by the faith of
men,
We 've some old crab-trees here at home, that will
not

Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors :
We call a nettle but a nettle, and
The faults of fools but folly.

Com. Ever right.

Cor. Menenius ever, ever.

Her. Give way there, and go on !

Cor. [*To his Wife and Mother.*] Your hand
—and yours :

Ere in our own house I do shade my head,
The good patricians must be visited ;
From whom I have received not only greetings,
But with them charge of honours.

Vol. I have lived
To see inherited my very wishes
And the buildings of my fancy : only there
Is one thing wanting, which I doubt not but
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

Cor. Know, good mother,
I had rather be their servant in my way,
Than sway with them in theirs.

Com. On, to the Capitol !

[*Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state as before.*

BRUTUS and SICINIUS come forward.

Bru. All tongues speak of him and the bleared
sights

Are spectacl'd to see him. Your prattling nurse

Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats him : the kitchen malkin pins
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,
Clambering the walls to eye him : stalls, bulks,
 windows,
Are smothered up, leads filled, and ridges horsed
With variable complexions, all agreeing
In earnestness to see him : seld-shown flamens
Do press among the popular throngs, and puff
To win a vulgar station ; our veiled dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil
Of Phoebus' burning kisses : such a pother
As if that whatsoever god who leads him
Were slily crept into his human powers,
And gave him graceful posture.

Sic.

On the sudden,

I warrant him consul.

Bru.

Then our office may,

During his power, go sleep.

Sic. He cannot temperately transport his
 honours

From where he should begin and end ; but will
Lose those he hath won.

Bru.

In that there's comfort.

Sic.

Doubt not

The commoners, for whom we stand, but they
Upon their ancient malice, will forget,
With the least cause, these his new honours ;

which

That he will give them, make I as little question
As he is proud to do 't.

Bru.

I heard him swear,

Were he to stand for consul, never would he
Appear i' the market-place, nor on him put
The napless vesture of humility ;
Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds
To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

Sic.

'T is right.

Bru. It was his word : O, he would miss it,
rather

Than carry 't, but by the suit o' the gentry to him,
And the desire of the nobles.

Sic.

I wish no better

Than have him hold that purpose, and to put it
In execution.

Bru.

'T is most like he will.

Sic. It shall be to him then as our good wills,
A sure destruction.

Bru.

So it must fall out

To him or our authorities. For an end,
We must suggest the people in what hatred

He still hath held them ; that to 's power he would
Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders, and
Dispropertied their freedoms ; holding them,
In human action and capacity,
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world
Than camels in the war, who have their provand
Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows
For sinking under them.

Sic. This, as you say, suggested
At some time when his soaring insolence
Shall reach the people,—which time shall not want,
If he be put upon 't : and that 's as easy
As to set dogs on sheep,—will be his fire
To kindle their dry stubble ; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

Enter a Messenger.

Bru. What's the matter ?

Mess. You are sent for to the Capitol. 'T is
thought,
That Marcius shall be consul.
I've seen the dumb men throng to see him, and
The blind to hear him speak : matrons flung
gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,
Upon him as he passed ; the nobles bended,

As to Jove's statue ; and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts :
I never saw the like.

Bru. Let's to the Capitol ;
And carry with us ears and eyes for the time,
But hearts for the event.

Sic. Have with you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—The Same. The Capitol.

Enter Two Officers, to lay cushions.

1 *Off.* Come, come, they are almost here.
How many stand for consulships ?

2 *Off.* Three, they say : but 't is thought of every
one Coriolanus will carry it.

1 *Off.* That's a brave fellow ; but he's ven-
geance proud, and loves not the common people.

2 *Off.* Faith, there have been many great men
that have flattered the people, who ne'er loved
them ; and there be many that they have loved,
they know not wherefore : so that, if they love
they know not why, they hate upon no better a
ground : therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care
whether they love or hate him manifests the true

knowledge he has in their disposition ; and, out of his noble carelessness, lets them plainly see't.

1 *Off.* If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he'd wave indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm ; but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him, and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite. Now, to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love.

2 *Off.* He hath deserved worthily of his country ; and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, bonneted without any further deed to have them at all into their estimation and report : but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury ; to report otherwise were a malice that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it.

1 *Off.* No more of him ; he is a worthy man : make way, they are coming.

A sennet. Enter, with Lictors before them, COMINIUS, the Consul, MENENIUS, CORIOLANUS, many other Senators, SICINIUS and BRUTUS. The Senators take their places; the Tribunes take theirs also by themselves.

Men. Having determined of the Volsces, and
To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,
As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To gratify his noble service that
Hath thus stood for his country. Therefore, please
you,

Most reverend and grave elders, to desire
The present consul, and last general
In our well-found successes, to report
A little of that worthy work performed
By Caius Marcius Coriolanus; whom
We meet here, both to thank, and to remember
With honours like himself.

1 *Sen.* Speak, good Cominius:
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think
Rather our state's defective for requital,
Than we to stretch it out. [*To the Tribunes.*]

Masters o' the people,
We do request your kindest ears; and, after,
Your loving motion toward the common body,

To yield what passes here.

Sic. We are convented
Upon a pleasing treaty ; and have hearts
Inclinable to honour and advance
The theme of our assembly.

Bru. Which the rather
We shall be blessed to do, if he remember
A kinder value of the people than
He hath hereto prized them at.

Men. That's off, that's off :
I would you rather had been silent. Please you
To hear Cominius speak ?

Bru. Most willingly :
But yet my caution was more pertinent
Than the rebuke you give it.

Men. He loves your people ;
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.—
Worthy Cominius, speak.—Nay, keep your place.

[CORIOLANUS rises, and offers to go away.]

1 *Sen.* Sit, Coriolanus : never shame to hear
What you have nobly done.

Cor. Your honours' pardon
I had rather have my wounds to heal again
Than hear say how I got them.

Bru. Sir, I hope,
My words disbenched you not.

Cor. No, sir : yet oft,
When blows have made me stay, I fled from words.
You soothed not, therefore hurt not. But your
people,
I love them as they weigh.

Men. Pray now, sit down.

Cor. I had rather have one scratch my head i'
the sun
When the alarm were struck, than idly sit
To hear my nothings monstered. [Exit.

Men. Masters o' the people,
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter,—
That's thousand to one good one,—when you now
see,
He had rather venture all his limbs for honour
Than one of 's ears to hear't?—Proceed, Com-
inius.

Com. I shall lack voice : the deeds of Coriolanus
Should not be uttered feebly.—It is held
That valour is the chiefest virtue, and
Most dignifies the haver : if it be,
The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpoised. At sixteen years,
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others : our then dictator,
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight,

When with his Amazonian chin he drove
The bristled lips before him. He bestrid
An o'er-pressed Roman, and i' the consul's view
Slew three opposers : Tarquin's self he met,
And struck him on his knee : in that day's feats,
When he might act the woman in the scene,
He proved best man i' the field, and for his meed
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age
Man-entered thus, he waxed like a sea ;
And, in the brunt of seventeen battles since,
He lurched all swords of the garland. For this
last,

Before and in Corioli, let me say,
I cannot speak him home : he stopped the fliers,
And by his rare example made the coward
Turn terror into sport. As weeds before
A vessel under sail, so men obeyed
And fell below his stem : his sword, death's
stamp,

Where it did mark, it took ; from face to foot
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was timed with dying cries. Alone he entered
The mortal gate of the city, which he painted
With shunless destiny ; aidless came off,
And with a sudden reinforcement struck
Corioli like a planet. Now all 's his :

When by-and-by the din of war gan pierce
His ready sense : then straight his doubled spirit
Re-quickened what in the flesh was fatigate,
And to the battle came he ; where he did
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'T were a perpetual spoil : and, till we called
Both field and city ours, he never stood
To ease his breast with panting.

Men. Worthy man !

1 *Sen.* He cannot but with measure fit the
honours

Which we devise him.

Com. Our spoils he kicked at ;
And looked upon things precious, as they were
The common muck o' the world : he covets less
Than misery itself would give ; rewards
His deeds with doing them ; and is content
To spend the time to end it.

Men. He's right noble :
Let him be called for.

1 *Sen.* Call Coriolanus

Off. He doth appear.

Re-enter CORIOLANUS.

Men. The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased
To make thee consul.

Cor. I do owe them still
My life and services.

Men. It then remains,
That you do speak to the people.

Cor. I do beseech you,
Let me o'erleap that custom ; for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat
them,
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage :
please you
That I may pass this doing.

Sic. Sir, the people
Must have their voices : neither will they bate
One jot of ceremony.

Men. Put them not to 't :
Pray you, go fit you to the custom, and
Take to you, as your predecessors have,
Your honour with your form.

Cor. It is a part
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.

Bru. Mark you that ?

Cor. To brag unto them,—thus I did, and
thus ;—
Show them the unaching scars which I should
hide,

As if I had received them for the hire
Of their breath only !

Men. Do not stand upon 't.—
We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,
Our purpose to them ;—and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

Sen. To Coriolanus come all joy and honour !

[*Flourish. Exeunt all but SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*

Bru. You see how he intends to use the people.

Sic. May they perceive his intent ! He will
require them,

As if he did contemn what he requested
Should be in them to give.

Bru. Come ; we'll inform them
Of our proceedings here : on the market-place
I know they do attend us. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—The Same. The Forum.

Enter several Citizens.

1 *Cit.* Once, if he do require our voices, we
ought not to deny him.

2 *Cit.* We may, sir, if we will.

3 *Cit.* We have power in ourselves to do it, but
it is a power that we have no power to do : for if

he show us his wounds, and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds, and speak for them ; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is monstrous: and for the multitude to be ingrateful were to make a monster of the multitude ; of the which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members.

1 *Cit.* And to make us no better thought of, a little help will serve : for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.

3 *Cit.* We have been called so of many ; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured : and truly, I think, if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south ; and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass.

2 *Cit.* Think you so ? Which way do you judge my wit would fly ?

3 *Cit.* Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will,—'t is strongly wedged up in a blockhead ; but if it were at liberty, t'would, sure, southward.

2 *Cit.* Why that way? -

3 *Cit.* To lose itself in a fog; where, being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return, for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife.

2 *Cit.* You are never without your tricks:—you may, you may.

3 *Cit.* Are you all resolved to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man. Here he comes, and in the gown of humility: mark his behaviour. We are not to stay all together, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars; wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues; therefore, follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

All. Content, content.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter CORIOLANUS and MENENIUS.

Men. O sir, you are not right: have you not known

The worthiest men have done 't?

Cor.

What must I say?—

I pray, sir,—Plague upon 't! I cannot bring
My tongue to such a pace.—Look, sir:—my
wounds;—

I got them in my country's service, when
Some certain of your brethren roared, and ran
From the noise of our own drums.

Men. O me, the gods!
You must not speak of that: you must desire them
To think upon you.

Cor. Think upon me? Hang 'em!
I would they would forget me, like the virtues
Which our divines lose by 'em.

Men. You'll mar all:
I'll leave you: pray you, speak to them, I pray
you,
In wholesome manner.

Enter two Citizens.

Cor. Bid them wash their faces,
And keep their teeth clean. [*Exit MENENIUS.*]
So, here comes a brace.

Re-enter two Citizens.

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

1 Cit. We do, sir; tell us what hath brought
you to 't.

Cor. Mine own desert.

2 Cit. Your own desert?

Cor. Ay, not mine own desire.

1 Cit. How! not your own desire?

Cor. No, sir: 't was never my desire yet to trouble the poor with begging.

1 Cit. You must think, if we give you anything, we hope to gain by you.

Cor. Well then, I pray, your price o' the consulship?

1 Cit. The price is, to ask it kindly.

Cor. Kindly! Sir, I pray, let me ha't: I have wounds to show you, which shall be yours in private.—Your good voice, sir; what say you?

2 Cit. You shall ha't, worthy sir.

Cor. A match, sir.—There is in all two worthy voices begged.—I have your alms: adieu.

1 Cit. But this is something odd.

2 Cit. An 't were to give again,—but 't is no matter. [Exeunt the two Citizens.

Enter two other Citizens.

Cor. Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

3 *Cit.* You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly.

Cor. Your enigma ?

3 *Cit.* You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends ; you have not, indeed, loved the common people.

Cor. You should account me the more virtuous, that I have not been common in my love. I will sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them : 't is a condition they account gentle : and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod, and be off to them most counterfeitly : that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man, and give it bountifully to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you I may be consul.

4 *Cit.* We hope to find you our friend, and therefore give you our voices heartily.

3 *Cit.* You have received many wounds for your country.

Cor. I will not seal your knowledge with showing them. I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

Both Cit. The gods give you joy, sir, heartily !

[*Exeunt.*]

Cor. Most sweet voices !—
Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this wolvish toge should I stand here,
To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear,
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to 't :—
What custom wills, in all things should we do 't,
The dust of antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heapt
For truth to o'er-peer.—Rather than fool it so,
Let the high office and the honour go
To one that would do thus.—I am half through :
The one part suffered, the other will I do.

Enter three other Citizens.

Here come more voices.—

Your voices : for your voices I have fought ;
Watched for your voices ; for your voices bear
Of wounds two dozen odd ; battles thrice six
I've seen, and heard of ; for your voices have
Done many things, some less, some more : your
 voices :

Indeed, I would be consul.

5 *Cit.* He has done nobly, and cannot go without
any honest man's voice.

6 *Cit.* Therefore, let him be consul. The gods

give him joy, and make him good friend to the people !

All. Amen, amen.—God save thee, noble consul !

[Exeunt Citizens.]

Cor.

Worthy voices !

Re-enter MENENIUS with BRUTUS and SICINIUS.

Men. You have stood your limitation ; and the tribunes

Endue you with the people's voice : remains

That, in the official marks invested, you

Anon do meet the senate.

Cor.

Is this done ?

Sic. The custom of request you have discharged :

The people do admit you ; and are summoned

To meet anon upon your approbation.

Cor. Where ? at the senate-house ?

Sic.

There, Coriolanus.

Cor. May I then change these garments ?

Sic. You may, sir.

Cor. That I'll straight do ; and, knowing myself again,

Repair to the senate-house.

Men. I'll keep you company.—Will you along ?

Bru. We stay here for the people.

Sic.

Fare you well.

[*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and MENENIUS.*

He has it now ; and by his looks, methinks,

'T is warm at 's heart.

Bru.

With a proud heart he wore
His humble weeds. Will you dismiss the people ?

Re-enter Citizens.

Sic. How now, my masters ? have you chose
this man ?

1 Cit. He has our voices, sir.

Bru. We pray the gods he may deserve your
loves.

2 Cit. Amen, sir. To my poor unworthy notice,
He mocked us when he begged our voices.

3 Cit.

Certainly,
He flouted us downright.

1 Cit. No, 't is his kind of speech ; he did not
mock us.

2 Cit. Not one amongst us, save yourself, but
says,

He used us scornfully : he should have showed us
His marks of merit, wounds received for 's
country.

Sic. Why, so he did, I am sure.

All.

No ; no man saw 'em.

3 *Cit.* He said he had wounds, which he could
show in private ;
And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,
'I would be consul,' says he : 'aged custom,
But by your voices, will not so permit me ;
Your voices therefore.' When we granted that,
Here was,—'I thank you for your voices,—thank
you,—
Your most sweet voices :—now you have left your
voices,
I have no further with you.'—Was not this
mockery ?

Sic. Why either were you ignorant to see 't
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
To yield your voices ?

Bru. Could you not have told him,
As you were lessoned,—when he had no power,
But was a petty servant to the state,
He was your enemy : ever spake against
Your liberties, and the charters that you bear
I' the body of the weal ; and now, arriving
A place of potency and sway o' the state,
If he should still malignantly remain
Fast foe to the plebeii, your voices might
Be curses to yourselves ? You should have said,
That, as his worthy deeds did claim no less

3 *Cit.* He's not confirmed ; we may deny him yet.

2 *Cit.* And will deny him :

I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

1 *Cit.* I twice five hundred, and their friends to piece 'em.

Bru. Get you hence instantly ; and tell those friends

They've chose a consul that will from them take
Their liberties ; make them of no more voice
Than dogs, that are as often beat for barking
As therefore kept to do so.

Sic. Let them assemble ;

And, on a safer judgment, all revoke
Your ignorant election. Enforce his pride,
And his old hate unto you : besides, forget not
With what contempt he wore the humble weed ;
How in his suit he scorned you : but your loves,
Thinking upon his services, took from you
The apprehension of his present portance,
Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion
After the inveterate hate he bears you.

Bru. Lay

A fault on us, your tribunes, that we laboured,
No impediment between, but that you must
Cast your election on him.

Sic. Say, you chose him

More after our commandment, than as guided
By your own true affections ; and that your minds,
Pre-occupied with what you rather must do
Than what you should, made you against the grain
To voice him consul. Lay the fault on us.

Bru. Ay, spare us not. Say, we read lectures to
you

How youngly he began to serve his country,
How long continued ; and what stock he springs of,
The noble house o' the Marcians ; from whence
came

That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king ;
Of the same house Publius and Quintus were,
That our best water brought by conduits hither ;
And Censorinus, nobly named so, twice being censor,
Was his great ancestor.

Sic. One thus descended,
That hath beside well in his person wrought
To be set high in place, we did commend
To your remembrances : but you have found,
Scaling his present bearing with his past,
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke
Your sudden approbation.

Bru. Say, you ne'er had done 't—
Harp on that still—but by our putting on ;

And presently, when you have drawn your number,
Repair to the Capitol.

All. We will so : almost all
Repent in their election. [*Exeunt Citizens.*

Bru. Let them go on ;
This mutiny were better put in hazard,
Than stay, past doubt, for greater.
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
With their refusal, both observe and answer
The vantage of his anger.

Sic. To the Capitol, come :
We will be there before the stream o' the people ;
And this shall seem, as partly 't is, their own,
Which we have goaded onward. [*Exeunt*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—The Same. A Street.

Cornets. Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, COMINIUS,
TITUS LARTIUS, Senators, and Patricians.

Cor. Tullus Aufidius, then, had made new head ?
Lart. He had, my lord ; and that it was which
caused

Our swifter composition.

Cor. So then, the Volsces stand but as at first ;

Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road
Upon 's again.

Com. They 're worn, lord consul, so
That we shall hardly in our ages see
Their banners wave again.

Cor. Saw you Aufidius ?

Lart. On safe-guard he came to me ; and did
curse

Against the Volsces, for they had so vilely
Yielded the town : he is retired to Antium.

Cor. Spoke he of me ?

Lart. He did, my lord.

Cor. How ? what ?

Lart. How often he had met you, sword to
sword ;

That of all things upon the earth he hated
Your person most ; that he would pawn his fortunes
To hopeless restitution, so he might
Be called your vanquisher.

Cor. At Antium lives he ?

Lart. At Antium.

Cor. I wish I had a cause to seek him there,
To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home.

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

Behold ! these are the tribunes of the people,

Cor. It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot,
To curb the will of the nobility :
Suffer 't, and live with such as cannot rule,
Nor ever will be ruled.

Bru. Call 't not a plot :
The people cry, you mocked them ; and, of late,
When corn was given them gratis, you repined ;
Scandaled the suppliant for the people, called
them

Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

Cor. Why, this was known before.

Bru. Not to them all.

Cor. Have you informed them sithence ?

Bru. How ! I inform them !

Com. You are like to do such business.

Bru. Not unlike,
Each way, to better yours.

Cor. Why then should I be consul ? By yond
clouds,

Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me
Your fellow tribune.

Sic. You show too much of that
For which the people stir. If you will pass
To where you are bound, you must inquire your
way,

Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit ;

Or never be so noble as a consul,
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

Men. Let's be calm.

Com. The people are abused.—Set on.—This
paltering

Becomes not Rome ; nor has Coriolanus
Deserved this so dishonoured rub, laid falsely
I' the plain way of his merit.

Cor. Tell me of corn !

This was my speech, and I will speak 't again—

Men. Not now, not now.

1 Sen. Not in this heat, sir, now.

Cor. Now, as I live, I will.—My nobler friends,
I crave their pardons :—

For the mutable, rank-scented many, let them
Regard me as I do not flatter, and
Therein behold themselves : I say again,
In soothing them we nourish 'gainst our senate
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
Which we ourselves have ploughed for, sowed and
scattered,

By mingling them with us, the honoured number,
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
Which they have given to beggars.

Men. Well, no more.

1 Sen. No more words, we beseech you.

Cor. How ! no more !
As for my country I have shed my blood,
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs
Coin words till they decay, against those measles
Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought
The very way to catch them.

Bru. You speak o' the people,
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their infirmity.

Sic. 'T were well
We let the people know 't.

Men. What, what ! his choler !

Cor. Choler !
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,
By Jove, 't would be my mind !

Sic. It is a mind
That shall remain a poison where it is,
Not poison any further.

Cor. 'Shall remain' !—
Hear you this Triton of the minnows ? mark you
His absolute 'shall' ?

Com. 'T was from the canon.

Cor. 'Shall' !
O good but most unwise patricians ! why,
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus
Given Hydra heart to choose an officer,

That with his peremptory 'shall,' being but
The horn and noise o' the monster's, wants not
spirit

To say, he'll turn your current in a ditch,
And make your channel his? If he have power,
Then vail your ignorance; if none, awake
Your dangerous lenity. If you are learned,
Be not as common fools: if you are not,
Let them have cushions by you. You are plebeians,
If they be senators: and they are no less,
When, both your voices blended, the great'st
taste

Most palates theirs. They choose their magistrate;
And such a one as he, who puts his 'shall,'
His popular 'shall,' against a graver bench
Than ever frowned in Greece. By Jove himself,
It makes the consuls base! and my soul aches
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter 'twixt the gap of both, and take
The one by the other.

Com. Well,—on to the market-place.

Cor. Whoever gave that counsel, to give forth
The corn o' the store-house gratis, as 't was used
Sometime in Greece,—

Men. Well, well; no more of that.

Cor. Though there the people had more absolute
power,
I say, they nourished disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.

Bru. Why, shall the people give
One that speaks thus, their voice?

Cor. I'll give my reasons,
More worthier than their voices. They know the
corn

Was not our recompense, resting well assured
They ne'er did service for 't. Being pressed to the
war,

Even when the navel of the state was touched,
They would not thread the gates: this kind of
service

Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' the war,
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they showed
Most valour, spoke not for them. The accusation
Which they have often made against the senate,
All cause unborn, could never be the motive
Of our so frank donation. Well, what then?
How shall this bisson multitude digest
The senate's courtesy? Let deeds express
What's like to be their words:—'We did request
it;

We are the greater poll, and in true fear

They gave us our demands.'—Thus we debase
The nature of our seats, and make the rabble
Call our cares fears; which will in time break ope
The locks o' the senate, and bring in the crows
To peck the eagles.—

Men. Come, enough.

Bru. Enough, with over-measure.

Cor. No, take more:

What may be sworn by, both divine and human,
Seal what I end withal!—This double worship,—
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
Insult without all reason; where gentry, title,
wisdom,

Cannot conclude, but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance,—it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while
To unstable slightness: purpose so barred, it
follows,

Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech
you,—

You that will be less fearful than discreet;
That love the fundamental part of state
More than you doubt the change on 't; that prefer
A noble life before a long, and wish
To rouse a body with a dangerous physic
That 's sure of death without it,—at once pluck out

The multitudinous tongue ; let them not lick
The sweet which is their poison : your dishonour
Mangles true judgment, and bereaves the state
Of that integrity which should become it ;
Not having the power to do the good it would,
For the ill which doth control 't.

Bru. 'Has said enough

Sic. 'Has spoken like a traitor, and shall answer
As traitors do.

Cor. Thou wretch ! despite o'erwhelm thee !—
What should the people do with these bald
tribunes ?

On whom depending, their obedience fails
To the greater bench : in a rebellion,
When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,
Then were they chosen : in a better hour
Let what is meet be said it must be meet,
And throw their power i' the dust.

Bru. Manifest treason !

Sic. This a consul ? no.

Bru. The *Ædiles*, ho !—

Enter an Ædile.

Let him be apprehended

Sic. Go, call the people ; [*Exit Ædile*] in whose
name myself

Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,
A foe to the public weal. Obey, I charge thee,
And follow to thine answer.

Cor. Hence, old goat!

Sen. We'll surety him.

Com. Aged sir, hands off.

Cor. Hence, rotten thing, or I shall shake thy
bones

Out of thy garments.

Sic. Help, ye citizens!

*Re-enter the Ædile, with others, and a rabble of
Citizens.*

Men. On both sides more respect.

Sic. Here's he that would take from you all
your power

Bru. Seize him, Ædiles.

Cit. Down with him! down with him!

[Several speak.]

2 Sen. Weapons! weapons! weapons!

[They all bustle about CORIOLANUS.]

Tribunes, patricians, citizens!—what, ho!—

Sicinius, Brutus, Coriolanus, citizens!

Cit. Peace, peace, peace! stay, hold, peace!

Men. What is about to be?—I'm out of breath;
Confusion's near: I cannot speak.—You, tribunes,

Speak to the people,—Coriolanus, patience :—

Speak, good Sicinius.

Sic. Hear me, people ; peace !

Cit. Let's hear our tribune :—peace ! Speak,
speak, speak.

Sic. You are at point to lose your liberties :
Marcius would have all from you ; Marcius,
Whom late you have named for consul.

Men. Fie, fie, fie !

This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

1 Sen. To unbuild the city, and to lay all flat.

Sic. What is the city but the people ?

Cit. True,

The people are the city.

Bru. By the consent of all, we were established
The people's magistrates.

Cit. You so remain.

Men. And so are like to do.

Com. That is the way to lay the city flat ;
To bring the roof to the foundation,
And bury all, which yet distinctly ranges,
In heaps and piles of ruin.

Sic. This deserves death.

Bru. Or let us stand to our authority,
Or let us lose it.—We do here pronounce,
Upon the part o' the people, in whose power

We were elected theirs, Marcius is worthy
Of present death.

Sic. Therefore lay hold of him ;
Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence
Into destruction cast him.

Bru. *Ædiles*, seize him.

Cit. Yield, Marcius, yield.

Men. Hear me one word ,
Beseech you, tribunes, hear me but a word.

Æd. Peace, peace !

Men. Be that you seem, truly your country's
friends,
And temperately proceed to what you would
Thus violently redress.

Bru. Sir, those cold ways,
That seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous
Where the disease is violent.—Lay hands upon
him,
And bear him to the rock.

Cor. No ; I'll die here.

[*Drawing his sword.*

There's some among you have beheld me fighting :
Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen me

Men. Down with that sword !—Tribunes, with-
draw awhile.

Bru. Lay hands upon him.

Men. Help ! Help Marcius, help,
You that be noble ; help him, young and old !

Cit. Down with him ! down with him !

*[In this mutiny, the Tribunes, the Ædiles, and
the People, are beat in.]*

Men. Go, get you to your house : be gone, away !
All will be naught else.

2 Sen. Get you gone.

Com. Stand fast ;

We have as many friends as enemies.

Men. Shall it be put to that ?

1 Sen. The gods forbid !

I p'rythee, noble friend, home to thy house ;

Leave us to cure this cause.

Men. For 't is a sore upon us
You cannot tent yourself : be gone, beseech you.

Com. Come, sir, along with us.

Cor. I would they were barbarians, as they are,
Though in Rome littered ; not Romans, as they
are not,

Though calved i' the porch o' the Capitol,—

Men. Be gone ;

Put not your worthy rage into your tongue ;

One time will owe another.

Cor. On fair ground

I could beat forty of them.

Men. I could myself
Take up a brace of the best of them ; yea, the two
tribunes.

Com. But now, 't is odds beyond arithmetic ;
And manhood is called foolery, when it stands
Against a falling fabric.—Will you hence,
Before the tag return ? whose rage doth rend
Like interrupted waters, and o'er-bear
What they are used to bear.

Men. Pray you, be gone.
I'll try whether my old wit be in request
With those that have but little : this must be
patched
With cloth of any colour.

Com. Nay, come away.

[*Exeunt CORIOLANUS, COMINIUS, and others.*]

1 *Pat.* This man has marred his fortune.

Men. His nature is too noble for the world :
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for 's power to thunder. His heart's his
mouth :

What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;
And, being angry, does forget that ever
He heard the name of death.—[*A noise within.*]
Here's goodly work !

2 *Pat.* I would they were a-bed !

Men. I would they were in Tiber!—What, the
vengeance,

Could he not speak 'em fair?

Re-enter BRUTUS and SICINIUS, with the rabble.

Sic. Where is this viper

That would depopulate the city, and

Be every man himself?

Men. You worthy tribunes,—

Sic. He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian
rock

With rigorous hands: he hath resisted law,

And therefore law shall scorn him further trial

Than the severity of the public power,

Which he so sets at nought.

1 Cit. He shall well know

The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,

And we their hands.

Cit. He shall, sure on 't.

Men. Sir, sir,—

Sic. Peace!

Men. Do not cry havoc, where you should but
hunt

With modest warrant.

Sic. Sir, how comes 't that you

Have help to make this rescue?

Men. Hear me speak:—

As I do know the consul's worthiness,
So can I name his faults.—

Sic. Consul !—what consul ?

Men. The consul Coriolanus.

Bru. He a consul !

Cit. No, no, no, no, no.

Men. If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours, good
people,

I may be heard, I'd crave a word or two,
The which shall turn you to no further harm
Than so much loss of time.

Sic. Speak briefly, then ;

For we are peremptory to dispatch
This viperous traitor. To eject him hence
Were but our danger ; and to keep him here,
Our certain death : therefore it is decreed
He dies to-night.

Men. Now the good gods forbid,
That our renownéd Rome, whose gratitude
Towards her deservéd children is enrolled
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam
Should now eat up her own !

Sic. He's a disease, that must be cut away.

Men. O, he's a limb that has but a disease ;
Mortal, to cut it off ; to cure it, easy.
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death !

Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost,—
Which, I dare vouch, is more than that he hath,
By many an ounce,—he dropped it for his country :
And what is left, to lose it by his country,
Were to us all, that do 't and suffer it,
A brand to th' end o' the world.

Sic. This is clean kam.

Bru. Merely awry ; when he did love his
country,

It honoured him.

Men. The service of the foot,
Being once gangrened, is not then respected
For what before it was—

Bru. We 'll hear no more.—
Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence ;
Lest his infection, being of catching nature,
Spread further.

Men. One word more, one word.
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find
The harm of unscanned swiftness, will, too late,
Tie leaden pounds to 's heels. Proceed by process ;
Lest parties—as he is beloved—break out,
And sack great Rome with Romans.

Bru. If it were so,—

Sic. What do ye talk ?
Have we not had a taste of his obedience ?

Our ædiles smote ! ourselves resisted !—Come !—

Men. Consider this :—he has been bred i' the
wars

Since he could draw a sword, and is ill schooled
In bolted language ; meal and bran together
He throws without distinction. Give me leave,
I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him
Where he shall answer, by a lawful form,—
In peace,—to his utmost peril.

1 Sen. Noble tribunes,
It is the humane way : the other course
Will prove too bloody ; and the end of it
Unknown to the beginning.

Sic. Noble Menenius,
Be you then as the people's officer.—
Masters, lay down your weapons.

Bru. Go not home.

Sic. Meet on the market-place.—We'll attend
you there :
Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed
In our first way.

Men. I'll bring him to you.—
[*To the Senators.*] Let me desire your company.
He must come,
Or what is worst will follow.

1 Sen. Pray you, let's to him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—A Room in CORIOLANUS' House.

Enter CORIOLANUS and Patricians.

Cor. Let them pull all about mine ears ; present
me

Death on the wheel, or at wild horses' heels ;
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight ; yet will I still
Be thus to them.

1 Pat. You do the nobler.

Cor. I muse, my mother
Does not approve me further, who was wont
To call them woollen vassals, things created
'To buy and sell with groats ; to show bare heads
In congregations, to yawn, be still, and wonder,
When one but of my ordinance stood up
To speak of peace or war.

Enter VOLUMNIA.

I talk of you :
Why did you wish me milder ? Would you have
me
False to my nature ? Rather say, I play
The man I am.

Vol. O, sir, sir, sir !

I would have had you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.

Cor. Let go.

Vol. You might have been enough the man you
are,

With striving less to be so : lesser had been
The thwartings of your dispositions, if
You had not showed them how you were disposed
Ere they lacked power to cross you.

Cor. Let them hang.

Vol. Ay, and burn too.

Enter MENENIUS and Senator.

Men. Come, come ; you have been too rough,
something too rough :

You must return, and mend it.

1 Sen. There's no remedy ;

Unless, by not so doing, our good city
Cleave in the midst, and perish.

Vol. Pray be counselled.

I have a heart as little apt as yours,
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
To better vantage.

Men. Well said, noble woman !

Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that

The violent fit o' the time craves it as physio
For the whole state, I'd put mine armour on,
Which I can scarcely bear.

Cor. What must I do?

Men. Return to the tribunes.

Cor. Well, what then? what then?

Men. Repent what you have spoke.

Cor. For them?—I cannot do it to the gods;
Must I then do't to them?

Vol. You are too absolute;
Though therein you can never be too noble;
But when extremities speak—I have heard you
say,

Honour and policy, like unsevered friends,
If the war do grow together: grant that, and tell me,
In peace, what each of them by the other lose,
That they combine not there?

Cor. Tush, tush!

Men. A good demand.

Vol. If it be honour, in your wars, to seem
The same you are not,—which, for your best ends,
You adopt your policy,—how is it less, or worse,
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour, as in war, since that to both
It stands in like request?

Cor. Why force you this?

Vol. Because that now it lies you on to speak
To the people ; not by your own instruction,
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,
But with such words that are but rotes in
Your tongue, though but bastards, and syllables
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune, and
The hazard of much blood.—

I would dissemble with my nature, where
My fortunes and my friends at stake required
I should do so in honour : I am in this,
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles ;
And you will rather show our general louts
How you can frown, than spend a fawn upon 'em
For the inheritance of their loves, and safeguard
Of what that want might ruin.

Men. Noble lady !—
Come, go with us : speak fair ; you may salve so,
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
Of what is past.

Vol. I pr'ythee now, my son,
Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand ;
And thus far having stretched it,—here be with
them,—

Thy knee bussing the stones,—for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant
More learned than the ears—waving thy head,
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,
Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling,—say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and, being bred in broils,
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,
Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,
In asking their good loves ; but thou wilt frame
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far
As thou hast power and person.

Men.

This but done,

Even as she speaks it, why, their hearts were
yours ;

For they have pardons, being asked, as free
As words to little purpose.

Vol.

Pr'ythee now,

Go, and be ruled ; although, I know, thou hadst
rather

Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf
Than flatter him in a bower. Here is Cominius.

Enter COMINIUS.

Com. I have been i' the market-place ; and, sir,
't is fit

You make strong party, or defend yourself
By calmness or by absence: all's in anger.

Men. Only fair speech.

Com. I think, 't will serve; if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

Vol. He must, and will.—
Pr'ythee now, say you will, and go about it.

Cor. Must I go show them my unbarbed scence?
Must I

With my base tongue give to my noble heart.
A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do't:
Yet were there but this single plot to lose,
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind it,
And throw 't against the wind.—To the market-
place!—

You have put me now to such a part, which never
I shall discharge to the life.

Com. Come, come, we'll prompt you.

Vol. I pr'ythee now, sweet son: as thou hast
said

My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part
Thou hast not done before.

Cor. Well, I must do't.
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turned,

Which quired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an eunuch's, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep ! The smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks ; and school-boys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight ! A beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips ; and my armed
 knees,

Who bowed but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms !—I will not do 't,
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

Vol.

At thy choice then :

To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin : let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness ; for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
Thy valiantness was mine ; thou suck'dst it from
 me,

But owe thy pride thyself.

Cor.

Pray, be content :

Mother, I am going to the market-place ;
Chide me no more. I 'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home beloved
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going.

Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul,
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I' the way of flattery further.

Vol. Do your will. [*Exit.*

Com. Away! the tribunes do attend you: arm
yourself

To answer mildly; for they are prepared
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.

Cor. The word is, 'Mildly.'—Pray you, let us go:
Let them accuse me by invention, I
Will answer in mine honour.

Men. Ay, but mildly.

Cor. Well, mildly be it then; mildly. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—The Same. The Forum.

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

Bru. In this point charge him home, that he
affects

Tyrannical power: if he evade us there,
Enforce him with his envy to the people;
And that the spoil got on the Antiates
Was ne'er distributed.—

Enter an Edile.

What, will he come?

Ed. He's coming.

Bru. How accompanied?

Ed. With old Menenius, and those senators
That always favoured him.

Sic. Have you a catalogue
Of all the voices that we have procured,
Set down by the poll?

Ed. I have; 't is ready.

Sic. Have you collected them by tribes?

Ed. I have.

Sic. Assemble presently the people hither:
And when they hear me say, 'It shall be so
I' the right and strength o' the commons,' be it
either

For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,
If I say fine, cry 'Fine;' if death, cry 'Death;'
Insisting on the old prerogative
And power i' the truth o' the cause.

Ed. I shall inform them

Bru. And when such time they have begun to
cry,

Let them not cease, but with a din confused
Enforce the present execution

Of what we chance to sentence.

Æd.

Very well.

Sic. Make them be strong, and ready for this
hint,

When we shall hap to give 't them.

Bru.

Go ; about it.—[*Exit Ædils.*

Put him to choler straight. He hath been used
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth
Of contradiction : being once chafed, he cannot
Be reined again to temperance ; then he speaks
What's in his heart ; and that is there which looks
With us to break his neck.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, COMINIUS,
Senators, and Patricians.*

Sic. Well, here he comes.

Men.

Calmly, I do beseech you.

Cor. Ay, as an ostler, that for the poorest piece
Will bear the knave by the volume.—The honoured
gods

Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
Supplied with worthy men ! plant love among us !
Throng our large temples with the shows of peace,
And not our streets with war !

1 *Sen.*

Amen, amen.

Men. A noble wish.

Re-enter Edile, with Citizens.

Sic. Draw near, ye people.

Ed. List to your tribunes ; audience : peace ! I
say.

Cor. First, hear me speak.

Both Tri. Well, say.—Peace, ho !

Cor. Shall I be charged no further than this
present ?

Must all determine here ?

Sic. I do demand

If you submit you to the people's voices,
Allow their officers, and are content
To suffer lawful censure for such faults
As shall be proved upon you ?

Cor. I am content.

Men. Lo, citizens, he says, he is content :
The warlike service he has done, consider ;
Think on the wounds his body bears, which show
Like graves i' the holy churchyard.

Cor. Scratches with briers,
Scars to move laughter only.

Men. Consider further,
That when he speaks not like a citizen,
You find him like a soldier. Do not take
His rougher accents for malicious sounds,

But, as I say, such as become a soldier,
Rather than envy you.

Com. Well, well ; no more.

Cor. What is the matter,
That, being passed for consul with full voice,
I am so dishonoured, that the very hour
You take it off again ?

Sic. Answer to us.

Cor. Say then : 't is true, I ought so.

Sic. We charge you, that you have contrived to
take

From Rome all seasoned office, and to wind
Yourself into a power tyrannical ;
For which you are a traitor to the people.

Cor. How ! traitor !

Men. Nay, temperately ; your promise.

Cor. The fires i' the lowest hell fold in the
people !

Call me their traitor !—Thou injurious tribune !
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,
In thy hands clutched as many millions, in
Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say,
Thou liest, unto thee, with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

Sic. Mark you this, people !

Cit. To the rock ! to the rock with him !

Sic.

Peace!

We need not put new matter to his charge :
What you have seen him do, and heard him speak,
Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,
Opposing laws with strokes, and here defying
Those whose great power must try him ; even this,
So criminal, and in such capital kind,
Deserves the extremest death.

Bru.

But since he hath
Served well for Rome,—

Cor.

What do you prate of service?

Bru. I talk of that, that know it.*Cor.*

You?

Men. Is this the promise that you made your
mother?*Com.* Know, I pray you,—*Cor.*

I'll know no further.

Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,
Vagabond exile, flaying, pent to linger
But with a grain a day,—I would not buy
Their mercy at the price of one fair word ;
Nor check my courage for what they can give,
To have 't with saying, 'Good morrow.'

Sic.

For that he has—

As much as in him lies—from time to time
Envied against the people, seeking means

To pluck away their power ; as now at last
Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence
Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers
That do distribute it : in the name o' the people,
And in the power of us, the tribunes, we,
Even from this instant, banish him our city ;
In peril of precipitation
From off the rock Tarpeian, never more
To enter our Rome gates. I' the people's name,
I say, it shall be so.

Cit. It shall be so, it shall be so ; let him away :
He's banished, and it shall be so.

Com. Hear me, my masters, and my common
friends ;—

Sic. He's sentenced : no more hearing.

Com. Let me speak :

I have been consul, and can show for Rome
Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love
My country's good, with a respect more tender,
More holy and profound, than mine own life,
My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase,
And treasure of my loins ; then if I would
Speak that—

Sic. We know your drift :—speak what !

Bru. There's no more to be said, but he is
banished,

As enemy to the people and his country :
It shall be so.

Cit. It shall be so, it shall be so.

Cor. You common cry of curs ! whose breath I
hate

As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air,—I banish you.
And here remain with your uncertainty !
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts !
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair ! Have the power still
To banish your defenders ; till, at length
Your ignorance, which finds not, till it feels,
Making not reservation of yourselves,
Still your own foes, deliver you, as most
Abated captives, to some nation
That won you without blows ! Despising, then,
For you, the city, thus I turn my back.
There is a world elsewhere.

[*Exeunt CORIOLANUS, COMINIUS, MENENIUS, Sena-
tors, and Patricians.*]

Æd. The people's enemy is gone, is gone !

Cit. Our enemy is banished ! he is gone ! Hoo !
hoo !

[*They all shout, and throw up their caps.*]

Sic. Go, see him out at gates ; and follow him,
As he hath followed you, with all despite ;
Give him deserved vexation. Let a guard
Attend us through the city.

Cit. Come, come ; let us see him out at gates :
come.—

The gods preserve our noble tribunes !—Come.

[*Exeunt.*



ACT IV.

SCENE I.—The Same. Before a Gate of the City.

Enter CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENE-
NIUS, COMINIUS, and several young Patricians.

Cor. Come, leave your tears ; a brief farewell :—
the beast

With many heads butts me away. — Nay,
mother,

Where is your ancient courage? you were used
To say, extremity was the trier of spirits ;
That common chances common men could bear ;
That, when the sea was calm, all boats alike
Showed mastership in floating : fortune's blows
When most struck home, being gentle,—wounded,
—craves

A noble cunning : you were used to load me
With precepts, that would make invincible
The heart that conned them.

Vir. O heavens ! O heavens !

Cor. Nay, I pr'ythee, woman,—

Vol. Now, the red pestilence strike all trades in
Rome,

And occupations perish !

Cor. What, what, what !

I shall be loved when I am lacked. Nay, mother,
Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say
If you had been the wife of Hercules
Six of his labours you'd have done, and saved
Your husband so much sweat.—Cominius,
Droop not ; adieu.—Farewell, my wife,—my
mother :

I'll do well yet.—Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are salter than a younger man's,
And venomous to thine eyes.—My sometime
general,

I've seen thee stern, and thou hast oft beheld
Heart-hardening spectacles ; tell these sad women,
'T is foud to wail inevitable strokes,
As 't is to laugh at 'em.—My mother, you wot
well,

My hazards still have been your solace ; and

Believe 't not lightly,—though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon that his fen
Makes feared, and talked of more than seen,—your
son

Will or exceed the common, or be caught
With cautelous baits and practice.

Vol. My first son,
Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius
With thee awhile: determine on some course,
More than a wild exposure to each chance
That starts i' the way before thee.

Cor. O the gods!

Com. I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee
Where thou shalt rest, that thou may'st hear of us
And we of thee: so, if the time thrust forth
A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,
And lose advantage, which doth ever cool
I' the absence of the needer.

Cor. Fare ye well:
Thou hast years upon thee; and thou art too full
Of the war's surfeits, to go rove with one
That's yet unbruised: bring me but out at gate.—
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and
My friends of noble touch, when I am forth,
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come.

While I remain above the ground, you shall
Hear from me still ; and never of me aught
But what is like me formerly.

Men. That's worthily
As any ear can hear.—Come, let's not weep.—
If I could shake off but one seven years
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,
I'd with thee every foot.

Cor. Give me thy hand.—
Come. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—The Same. A Street near the Gate.

Enter SICINIUS, BRUTUS, and an Ædile.

Sic. Bid them all home ; he's gone, and we'll no
further.—

The nobility are vexed, whom we see have sided
In his behalf.

Bru. Now we have shown our power,
Let us seem humbler after it is done
Than when it was a-doing.

Sic. Bid them home :
Say, their great enemy is gone, and they
Stand in their ancient strength.

Bru. Dismiss them home. [*Exit Ædile,*

Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and MENENIUS.

Here comes his mother.

Sic. Let's not meet her.

Bru. Why?

Sic. They say, she's mad.

Bru. They have ta'en note of us : keep on your way.

Vol. O, ye're well met. The hoarded plague o' the gods

Requite your love !

Men. Peace, peace ; be not so loud.

Vol. If that I could for weeping, you should hear,—

Nay, and you shall hear some.—[*To BRUTUS.*] Will you be gone ?

Vir. [*To SICINIUS.*] You shall stay too.—I would I had the power

To say so to my husband.

Sic. Are you man-kind ?

Vol. Ay, fool ; is that a shame ?—Note but this fool.—

Was not a man my father ? Hadst thou foxship
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
Than thou hast spoken words ?

Sic. O blessed heavens !

Vol. More noble blows, than ever thou wise
words ;
And for Rome's good.—I'll tell thee what ;—yet
go :—

Nay, but thou shalt stay too.—I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,
His good sword in his hand.

Sic.

What then ?

Vir.

What then !

He'd make an end of thy posterity.

Vol. Bastards, and all.—

Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome !

Men. Come, come, peace.

Sic. I would he had continued to his country
As he began ; and not unknot himself
The noble knot he made.

Bru. I would he had.

Vol. 'I would he had' ! 'T was you incensed the
rabble :

Oats, that can judge as fitly of his worth
As I can of those mysteries which heaven
Will not have earth to know.

Bru.

Pray, let us go.

Vol. Now, pray, sir, get you gone.
You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear
this :—

As far as doth the Capitol exceed
The meanest house in Rome, so far my son,—
This lady's husband here, this, do you see,—
Whom you have banished, does exceed you all.

Bru. Well, well ; we 'll leave you.

Sic. Why stay we to be baited
With one that wants her wits ?

Vol. Take my prayers with you.—

[*Exeunt Tribunes.*]

I would the gods had nothing else to do
But to confirm my curses. Could I meet 'em
But once a day, it would unclog my heart
Of what lies heavy to 't.

Men. You have told them home ;
And, by my troth, you 've cause. You 'll sup
with me ?

Vol. Anger's my meat ; I sup upon myself,
And so shall starve with feeding.—Come, let's go :
Leave this faint puling, and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

Men. Fie, fie, fie !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—A Highway between Rome and
Antium.

Enter a Roman and a Volsc, meeting.

Rom. I know you well, sir, and you know me :
your name, I think, is Adrian.

Vol. It is so, sir : truly, I have forgot you.

Rom. I am a Roman ; and my services are, as
you are, against 'em : know you me yet ?

Vol. Nicanor ? No.

Rom. The same, sir.

Vol. You had more beard when I last saw you ;
but your favour is well approved by your tongue.
What's the news in Rome ? I have a note from the
Volscian state, to find you out there : you have
well saved me a day's journey.

Rom. There hath been in Rome strange insur-
rections ; the people against the senators, patricians,
and nobles.

Vol. Hath been ? Is it ended then ? Our state
thinks not so : they are in a most warlike prepara-
tion, and hope to come upon them in the heat of
their division.

Rom. The main blaze of it is past, but a small
thing would make it flame again. For the nobles

receive so to heart the banishment of that worthy Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe aptness to take all power from the people, and to pluck from them their tribunes for ever. This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost mature for the violent breaking out.

Vols. Coriolanus banished !

Rom. Banished, sir.

Vols. You will be welcome with this intelligence, Nicanor.

Rom. The day serves well for them now. I have heard it said, the fittest time to corrupt a man's wife is when she's fallen out with her husband. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars, his great opposer, Coriolanus, being now in no request of his country.

Vols. He cannot choose. I am most fortunate, thus accidentally to encounter you : you have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

Rom. I shall, between this and supper, tell you most strange things from Rome, all tending to the good of their adversaries. Have you an army ready, say you ?

Vols. A most royal one ; the centurions and their charges, distinctly billeted, already in the

entertainment, and to be on foot at an hour's warning.

Rom. I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the man, I think, that shall set them in present action. So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of your company.

Vols. You take my part from me, sir ; I have the most cause to be glad of yours.

Rom. Well, let us go together. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.—Antium. Before AUFIDIUS's House.

Enter CORIOLANUS, in mean apparel, disguised and muffled.

Cor. A goodly city is this Antium.—City,
T is I that made thy widows : many an heir
Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars
Have I heard groan and drop : then, know me not,
Lest that thy wives with spits, and boys with
stones,
In puny battle slay me.

Enter a Citizen.

Save you, sir.

Cit. And you.

Cor. Direct me, if it be your will,

Where great Aufidius lies. Is he in Antium?

Cit. He is, and feasts the nobles of the state
At his house this night.

Cor. Which is his house, beseech you?

Cit. This, here before you.

Cor. Thank you, sir. Farewell.

[*Exit Citizen.*]

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast
sworn,

Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,

Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise,

Are still together, who twin, as't were, in love

Unseparable, shall within this hour,

On a dissension of a doit, break out

To bitterest enmity: so, fellest foes,

Whose passions and whose plots have broke their
sleep

To take the one the other, by some chance,

Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear
friends

And interjoin their issues. So with me:—

My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon

This enemy town. I'll enter: if he slay me,

He does fair justice; if he give me way,

I'll do his country service.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.—The same. A Hall in Aufidius's House.

Music within. Enter a Servant.

1 *Serv.* Wine, wine, wine! What service is here! I think our fellows are asleep.

[*Exit.*

Enter a second Servant.

2 *Serv.* Where's Cots? my master calls for him.
—Cots! [*Exit.*

Enter CORIOLANUS.

Cor. A goodly house: the feast smells well;
but I
Appear not like a guest.

Re-enter the first Servant.

1 *Serv.* What would you have, friend? Whence are you? Here's no place for you: pray, go to the door.

Cor. I have deserved no better entertainment,
In being Coriolanus.

Re-enter second Servant.

2 *Serv.* Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such companions? Pray, get you out.

Cor. Away !

2 Serv. Away ! Get you away.

Cor. Now thou art troublesome.

2 Serv. Are you so brave ? I'll have you talked with anon.

Enter a third Servant. The first meets him.

3 Serv. What fellow's this ?

1 Serv. A strange one as ever I looked on : I cannot get him out o' the house : pr'ythee, call my master to him.

3 Serv. What have you to do here, fellow ? Pray you, avoid the house.

Cor. Let me but stand ; I will not hurt your hearth.

3 Serv. What are you ?

Cor. A gentleman.

3 Serv. A marvellous poor one.

Cor. True, so I am.

3 Serv. Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other station ; here's no place for you ; pray you, avoid : come.

Cor. Follow your function ; go,
And batten on cold bits. [*Pushes him away.*

3 Serv. What, will you not ?
Pr'ythee, tell my master what a strange guest he has here.

2 *Serv.* And I shall.

[*Exit.*

3 *Serv.* Where dwellest thou?

Cor. Under the canopy.

3 *Serv.* Under the canopy?

Cor. Ay.

3 *Serv.* Where is that?

Cor. I' the city of kites and crows.

3 *Serv.* I' the city of kites and crows!—What an ass it is!—Then thou dwellest with daws too?

Cor. No, I serve not thy master.

3 *Serv.* How, sir! Do you meddle with my master?

Cor. Ay; 't is an honest service than to meddle with thy mistress.

Thou prat'st, and prat'st: serve with thy trencher.

Hence! [*Beats him away.*

Enter AUFIDIUS and the second Servant.

Auf. Where is this fellow?

2 *Serv.* Here, sir. I'd have beaten him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within.

Auf. Whence com'st thou? what wouldst thou? thy name?

Why speak'st not? speak, man: what's thy name?

Cor. [*Unmuffling.*] If, Tullus, not yet thou knowest me, and seeing me,

Thou dost not think me for the man I am,
Necessity commands me name myself.

Auf. What is thy name? [*Servants retire.*]

Cor. A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,
And harsh in sound to thine.

Auf. Say, what's thy name?
Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in 't. Though thy tackle's
torn,

Thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name?

Cor. Prepare thy brow to frown. Knew'st
thou me yet?

Auf. I know thee not:—thy name?

Cor. My name is Caius Marcius, who hath
done

To thee particularly, and to all the Volscies,
Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may
My surname, Coriolanus. The painful service,
The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood
Shed for my thankless country, are requited
But with that surname; a good memory,
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou should'st bear me. Only that name
remains:

The cruelty and envy of the people,
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who

Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless
It be to do thee service.

Auf.

O Marcus, Marcus !

Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my
heart

A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,
And say 'T is true,' I 'd not believe them more
Than thee, all noble Marcus.—Let me twine
Mine arms about that body, whereagainst
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,
And scarred the moon with splinters ! Here I
clip

The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,
I loved the maid I married : never man
Sighed truer breath ; but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing, more dances my rapt heart,
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars, I tell
thee,

We have a power on foot ; and I had purpose
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,

Or lose mine arm for 't. Thou hast beat me out
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me :
We have been down together in my sleep,
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat,
And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy

Marcus,

Had we no other quarrel else to Rome, but that
Thou art thence banished, we would muster all
From twelve to seventy ; and, pouring war
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,
Like a bold flood o'er-bear. O, come ; go in,
And take our friendly senators by the hands ;
Who now are here, taking their leaves of me,
Who am prepared against your territories,
Though not for Rome itself.

Cor.

You bless me, gods !

Auf. Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt
have

The leading of thine own revenges, take
The one half of my commission ; and set down—
As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st
Thy country's strength and weakness—thine own
ways ;

Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,
Or rudely visit them, in parts remote,

To fright them, ere destroy. But come, go in :
Let me commend thee first to those that shall
Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes !
And more a friend than e'er an enemy ;
Yet Marcius, that was much. Your hand : most
welcome !

[*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.*]

1 *Serv.* [*Advancing.*] Here's a strange alteration !

2 *Serv.* By my hand, I had thought to have stricken him with a cudgel ; and yet my mind gave me, his clothes made a false report of him.

1 *Serv.* What an arm he has ! He turned me about with his finger and his thumb as one would set up a top.

2 *Serv.* Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him : he had, sir, a kind of face, methought,—I cannot tell how to term it.

1 *Serv.* He had so ; looking as it were,—Would I were hanged, but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

2 *Serv.* So did I, I'll be sworn. He is simply the rarest man i' the world.

1 *Serv.* I think he is ; but a greater soldier than he, you wot one.

2 *Serv.* Who ? my master ?

1 *Serv.* Nay, it's no matter for that.

2 *Serv.* Worth six on him.

1 *Serv.* Nay, not so neither; but I take him to be the greater soldier.

2 *Serv.* 'Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that: for the defence of a town, our general is excellent.

1 *Serv.* Ay, and for an assault too.

Re-enter third Servant.

3 *Serv.* O, slaves, I can tell you news,—news, you rascals.

1 & 2 *Serv.* What, what, what? let's partake.

3 *Serv.* I would not be a Roman, of all nations; I had as lieve be a condemned man.

1 & 2 *Serv.* Wherefore? wherefore?

3 *Serv.* Why, here's he that was wont to thwack our general,—Caius Marcius.

1 *Serv.* Why do you say 'thwack our general'?

3 *Serv.* I do not say, 'thwack our general'; but he was always good enough for him.

2 *Serv.* Come, we are fellows, and friends: he was ever too hard for him; I have heard him say so himself.

1 *Serv.* He was too hard for him directly, to

say the truth on 't : before Corioli he scotched him and notched him like a carbonado.

2 *Serv.* An he had been cannibally given, he might have broiled and eaten him too.

1 *Serv.* But, more of thy news ?

3 *Serv.* Why, he is so made on here within as if he were son and heir to Mars ; set at upper end o' the table ; no question asked him by any of the senators but they stand bald before him. Our general himself makes a mistress of him ; sanctifies himself with 's hand, and turns up the white o' the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' the middle, and but one half of what he was yesterday ; for the other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He 'll go, he says, and sow'l the porter of Rome gates by the ears : he will mow down all before him, and leave his passage polled.

2 *Serv.* And he 's as like to do 't, as any man I can imagine.

3 *Serv.* Do 't ! he will do 't : for, look you, sir, he has as many friends as enemies ; which friends, sir, as it were, durst not, look you, sir, show themselves, as we term it, his friends, whilst he's in directitude.

1 *Serv.* Directitude ! what's that ?

3 *Serv.* But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again, and the man in blood, they will out of their burrows, like conies after rain, and revel all with him.

| 1 *Serv.* But when goes this forward ?

3 *Serv.* To-morrow ; to-day ; presently. You shall have the drum struck up this afternoon : 't is, as it were, a parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips.

2 *Serv.* Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

2 1 *Serv.* Let me have war, say I ; it exceeds peace as far as day does night ; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy ; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible ; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men.

2 *Serv.* 'T is so : and as war, in some sort, may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.

1 *Serv.* Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

3 *Serv.* Reason ; because they then less need one another. The wars, for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians.—They are rising, they are rising.

All. In, in, in, in !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—Rome. A Public Place.

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

Sic. We hear not of him, neither need we fear
him ;

His remedies are tame i' the present peace
And quietness o' the people, which before
Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends
Blush that the world goes well ; who rather had,
Though they themselves did suffer by 't, behold
Dissentious numbers pestering streets, than see
Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going
About their functions friendly.

Enter MENENIUS.

Bru. We stood to 't in good time.—Is this
Menenius ?

Sic. 'T is he, 't is he ; O, he is grown most
kind

Of late.—Hail, sir !

Bru. Hail, sir !

Men. Hail to you both !

Sic. Your Coriolanus, sir, is not much missed
But with his friends : the commonwealth doth
stand,

And so would do, were he more angry at it.

Men. All's well; and might have been much better, if

He could have temporised.

Sic. Where is he, hear you?

Men. Nay, I hear nothing: his mother and his wife

Hear nothing from him.

Enter three or four Citizens.

Cit. The gods preserve you both!

Sic. God den, our neighbours.

Bru. God den to you all, god den to you all.

1 Cit. Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees,

Are bound to pray for you both.

Sic. Live, and thrive!

Bru. Farewell, kind neighbours. We wished
Coriolanus

Had loved you as we did.

Cit. Now the gods keep you!

Both Tri. Farewell, farewell. [*Exeunt Citizens.*]

Sic. This is a happier and more comely time
Than when these fellows ran about the streets
Crying confusion.

Bru. Caius Marcius was

A worthy officer i' the war ; but insolent,
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking
Self-loving,—

Sic. And affecting one sole throne,
Without assistance.

Men. I think not so.

Sic. We should by this, to all our lamentation,
If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

Bru. The gods have well prevented it, and
Rome
Sits safe and still without him.

Enter an Ædile.

Æd. Worthy tribunes,
There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,
Reports, the Volscies with two several powers
Are entered in the Roman territories,
And with the deepest malice of the war
Destroy what lies before 'em.

† *Men.* 'T is Aufidius,
Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world ;
Which were inshelled when Marcius stood for
Rome,
And durst not once peep out.

Sic. Come, what talk you of Marcius ?

Bru. Go see this rumourer whipped.—It cannot
be

The Volsces dare break with us.

Men.

Cannot be !

We have record that very well it can ;
And three examples of the like have been
Within my age. But reason with the fellow,
Before you punish him, where he heard this ;
Lest you shall chance to whip your information,
And beat the messenger who bids beware
Of what is to be dreaded.

Sic.

Tell not me :

I know this cannot be.

Bru.

Not possible.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The nobles in great earnestness are going
All to the senate-house : some news is come
That turns their countenances.

Sic.

'T is this slave.

Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes :—his rais-
ing ;—

Nothing but his report.

Mess.

Yes, worthy sir,

The slave's report is seconded ; and more,
More fearful, is delivered.

Sic. What more fearful ?

Mess. It is spoke freely out of many mouths—
How probable I do not know—that Marcius,
Joined with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,
And vows revenge as spacious as between
The young'st and oldest thing.

Sic. This is most likely !

Bru. Raised only, that the weaker sort may
wish

Good Marcius home again.

Sic. The very trick on 't.

Men. This is unlikely :

He and Aufidius can no more atone,
Than violentest contrariety.

Enter another Messenger.

Mess. You are sent for to the senate ;
A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius,
Associated with Aufidius, rages
Upon our territories ; and have already
O'erborne their way, consumed with fire, and took
What lay before them

Enter COMINIUS.

Com. O, you have made good work.

Men. What news ? what news ?

Com. You have help to ravish your own daughters, and

To melt the city leads upon your pates ;

To see your wives dishonoured to your noses ;—

Men. What's the news ? what's the news ?

Com. Your temples burned in their cément ;
and

Your franchises, whereon you stood, confined
Into an auger's bore.

Men. Pray now, what news ?—

You have made fair work, I fear me.—Pray, your
news ?—

If Marcius should be joined with Volscians,—

Com.

If !

He is their god : he leads them like a thing

Made by some other deity than nature,

That shapes man better ; and they follow him

Against us brats, with no less confidence

Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,

Or butchers killing flies.

Men.

You 've made good work,

You, and your apron-men ; that stood so much

Upon the voice of occupation and

The breath of garlic-eaters !

Com.

He will shake

Your Rome about your ears.

Men. As Hercules
Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made
fair work.

Bru. But is this true, sir ?

Com. Ay ; and you 'll look pale
Before you find it other. All the regions
Do smilingly revolt ; and, who resist,
Are mocked for men of valiant ignorance,
And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame
him ?

Your enemies and his find something in him.

Men. We are all undone, unless
The noble man have mercy.

Com. Who shall ask it ?
The tribunes cannot do 't for shame ; the people
Deserve such pity of him as the wolf
Does of the shepherds : for his best friends, if they
Should say, ' Be good to Rome,' they charged him
even

As those should do that had deserved his hate,
And therein showed like enemies.

Men. 'T is true.
If he were putting to my house the brand
That should consume it, I have not the face
To say, ' Beseech you, cease.'—You have made
fair hands,

You and your crafts ; you have crafted fair.

Com. You have brought
A trembling upon Rome, such as was never
So incapable of help.

Tri. Say not, we brought it.

Men. How ! Was it we ? We loved him ; but,
like beasts,
And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

Com. But, I fear,
They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,
The second name of men, obeys his points
As if he were his officer. Desperation
Is all the policy, strength, and defence,
That Rome can make against them.

Enter a troop of Citizens.

Men. Here come the clusters.—
And is Aufidius with him ?—You are they
That made the air unwholesome, when you cast
Your stinking, greasy caps in hooting at
Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming ;
And not a hair upon a soldier's head
Which will not prove a whip : as many coxcombs
As you threw caps up, will he tumble down,
And pay you for your voices. 'T is no matter ;

If he could burn us all into one coal,
We have deserved it.

Cit. 'Faith, we hear fearful news.

1 *Cit.* For mine own part,
When I said, banish him, I said, 't was pity.

2 *Cit.* And so did I.

3 *Cit.* And so did I; and, to say the truth, so
did very many of us. That we did, we did for the
best; and though we willingly consented to his
banishment, yet it was against our will.

Com. Ye 're goodly things, you voices!

Men. You have made
Good work, you and your cry!—Shall 's to the
Capitol?

Com. O, ay; what else?

[*Exeunt COMINIUS and MENENIUS.*

Sic. Go, masters, get you home; be not dis-
mayed:

These are a side that would be glad to have
This true, which they so seem to fear. Go home,
And show no sign of fear.

1 *Cit.* The gods be good to us! Come, masters,
let's home. I ever said we were i' the wrong,
when we banished him.

2 *Cit.* So did we all. But come, let's home.

[*Exeunt Citizens.*

Bru. I do not like this news.

Sic. Nor I.

Bru. Let's to the Capitol.—'Would, half my
wealth

Would buy this for a lie !

Sic.

Pray, let us go.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—A Camp, at a small distance from
Rome.

Enter AUFIDIUS and his Lieutenant.

Auf. Do they still fly to the Roman ?

Lieu. I do not know what witchcraft's in him,
but

Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end ;
And you are darkened in this action, sir,
Even by your own.

Auf. I cannot help it now,
Unless, by using means, I lame the foot
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,
Even to my person, than I thought he would
When first I did embrace him ; yet his nature
In that's no changeling, and I must excuse
What cannot be amended.

Lieu.

Yet I wish, sir,—

I mean, for your particular,—you had not
Joined in commission with him ; but either
Had borne the action of yourself, or else
To him had left it solely.

Auf. I understand thee well : and be thou sure,
When he shall come to his account, he knows not
What I can urge against him. Although it seems,
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly,
And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,
Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon
As draw his sword ; yet he hath left undone
That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,
Whene'er we come to our account.

Lieu. Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry
Rome ?

Auf. All places yield to him ere he sits down ;
And the nobility of Rome are his :
The senators and patricians love him too :
The tribunes are no soldiers ; and their people
Will be as rash in the repeal, as hasty
To expel him thence. I think, he'll be to Rome,
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it
By sovereignty of nature. First he was
A noble servant to them, but he could not

Carry his honours even : whether 't was pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man ; whether defect of judgment,
To fail in the disposing of those chances
Which he was lord of ; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From the casque to the cushion, but commanding
peace

Even with the same austerity and garb
As he controlled the war ; but one of these—
As he hath spices of them all, not all,
For I dare so far free him—made him feared ;
So, hated ; and so, banished ; but he has a merit,
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time ;
And power unto itself most commendable
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
To extol what it hath done.
One fire drives out one fire ; one nail, one nail ;
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do
fail.

Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou 'rt poor'st of all ; then, shortly art thou mine.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Rome. A Public Place.

*Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS, BRUTUS,
and others.*

Men. No, I 'll not go ; you hear what he hath
said,

Which was sometime his general ; who loved him
In a most dear particular. He called me father :
But what o' that ? Go, you that banished him ;
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee
The way into his mercy. Nay, if he coyed
To hear Cominius speak, I 'll keep at home.

Com. He would not seem to know me.

Men. Do you hear ?

Com. Yet one time he did call me by my name,
I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to, forbad all names ;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forged himself a name 'o the fire
Of burning Rome.

Men. Why, so ; you have made good work :

A pair of tribunes that have wracked fair Rôme,
To make coals cheap ; a noble memory !

Com. I minded him, how royal 't was to pardon
When it was less expected : he replied,
It was a rare petition of a state
To one whom they had punished.

Men. Very well : could he say less ?

Com. I offered to awaken his regard
For 's private friends : his answer to me was,
He could not stay to pick them in a pile
Of noisome, musty chaff. He said, 't was folly,
For one poor grain or two to leave unburnt
And still to nose the offence.

Men. For one poor grain or two !
I am one of those ; his mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains :
You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt
Above the moon. We must be burnt for you.

Sic. Nay, pray, be patient : if you refuse your
aid
In this so never-needed help, yet do not
Upbraid 's with our distress. But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,
More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

Men.

No ; I 'll not meddle.

Sic. Pray you, go to him.

Men. What should I do ?

Bru. Only make trial what your love can do
For Rome, towards Marcius.

Men. Well ; and say that Marcius
Return me, as Cominius is returned,
Unheard ;—but as a discontented friend
Griefshot with his unkindness.—
Say it be so ; what then ?

Sic. Yet your good will
Must have that thanks from Rome, after the
measure

As you intended well.

Men. I'll undertake it :
I think, he'll hear me. Yet to bite his lip
And hum at good Cominius much unhearts me.
He was not taken well : he had not dined :
The veins unfilled, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive ; but when we've stuffed
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts : therefore, I'll watch
him

Till he be dieted to my request,
And then I'll set upon him.

Bru. You know the very road into his kindness
And cannot lose your way.

Men. Good faith, I 'll prove him.
Speed how it will, I shall ere long have knowledge
Of my success. [Exit.

Com. He 'll never hear him.

Sic. Not?

Com. I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 't would burn Rome ; and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneeled before him ;
'T was very faintly he said, " Rise ; " dismissed me
Thus, with his speechless hand : what he would do,
He sent in writing after me, what he would not ;
Bound with an oath to hold to his conditions :
So that all hope is vain,
Unless in 's noble mother, and his wife,
Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him
For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.

[Exit.

SCENE II.—The Volscian Camp before Rome.

The Guards at their stations,

Enter to them MENENIUS,

1 G. Stay ! whence are you ?

2 *G.*

Stand, and go back.

Men. You guard like men ; 't is well ; but, by your
leave,

I am an officer of state, and come
To speak with Coriolanus.

1 *G.*

From whence ?

Men.

From Rome.

1 *G.* You may not pass ; you must return : our
general

Will no more hear from thence.

2 *G.* You 'll see your Rome embraced with fire,
before

You 'll speak with Coriolanus.

Men.

Good my friends,

If you have heard your general talk of Rome,
And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks,
My name hath touched your ears : it is Menenius.

1 *G.* Be it so ; go back : the virtue of your
name

Is not here passable.

Men.

I tell thee, fellow,

Thy general is my lover ; I have been
The book of his good acts, whence men have read
His fame unparalleled, haply amplified ;
For I have ever magnified my friends—
Of whom he's chief—with all the size that verity

Would without lapsing suffer : nay, sometimes,
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground,
I have tumbled past the throw, and in his praise
Have almost stamped the leasing : therefore,
fellow,

I must have leave to pass.

1 *G.* 'Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies in his behalf as you have uttered words in your own, you should not pass here ; no, though it were as virtuous to lie as to live chastely. Therefore, go back.

Men. Pr'ythee, fellow, remember my name is Menenius, always factionary on the party of your general.

2 *G.* Howsoever you have been his liar, as you say you have, I am one that, telling true under him, must say, you cannot pass. Therefore go back.

Men. Has he dined, canst thou tell ? for I would not speak with him till after dinner.

1 *G.* You are a Roman, are you ?

Men. I am, as thy general is.

1 *G.* Then you should hate Rome, as he does. Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to

front his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant as you seem to be? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this? No, you are deceived, therefore, back to Rome, and prepare for your execution. You are condemned, our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon.

Men. Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here, he would use me with estimation.

2 *G.* Come, my captain knows you not.

Men. I mean, thy general.

1 *G.* My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go, lest I let forth your half-pint of blood;—back,—that's the utmost of your having:—back.

Men. Nay, but, fellow, fellow,—

Enter CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.

Cor. What's the matter?

Men. Now, you companion, I'll say an errand for you: you shall know now that I am in estimation, you shall perceive that a Jack-guardant cannot office me from my son Coriolanus: guess, but by my entertainment with him, if thou stand'st not i' the state of hanging, or of some death more long in

spectatorship, and crueller in suffering : behold now presently, and swoond for what's to come upon thee.—The glorious gods sit in hourly synod about thy particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than thy old father Menenius does ! O my son, my son ! thou art preparing fire for us ; look thee, here's water to quench it. I was hardly moved to come to thee ; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of your gates with sighs, and conjure thee to pardon Rome, and thy petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here,—this, who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee.

Cor. Away !

Men. How ! ' Away ! '

Cor. Wife, mother, child, I know not. My
affairs

Are servanted to others : though I owe
My revenge properly, my remission lies
In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,
Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather
Than pity note how much,—Therefore, be gone :
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved
thee,

Take this along ; I writ it for thy sake,

[*Gives a paper.*

And would have sent it. Another word, Menenius,
I will not hear thee speak.—This man, Aufidius,
Was my beloved in Rome; yet thou behold'st!

Auf. You keep a constant temper.

[*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS.*

1 *G.* Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

2 *G.* 'Tis a spell, you see, of much power.

You know the way home again.

1 *G.* Do you hear how we are shent for keeping
your greatness back?

2 *G.* What cause, do you think, I have to
swoond?

Men. I neither care for the world, nor your
general: for such things as you, I can scarce think
there's any, you are so slight. He that hath a will
to die by himself, fears it not from another. Let
your general do his worst. For you, be that you
are, long; and your misery increase with your age.
I say to you, as I was said to, 'Away!' [*Exit.*

1 *G.* A noble fellow, I warrant him.

2 *G.* The worthy fellow is our general: he is the
rock; the oak not to be wind-shaken. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—The Tent of CORIOLANUS.

Enter CORIOLANUS, AUFIDIUS, and others.

Cor. We will before the walls of Rome to-morrow

Set down our host.—My partner in this action,
You must report to the Volscian lords, how
plainly

I have borne this business.

Auf. Only their ends

You have respected ; stopped your ears against
The general suit of Rome ; never admitted
A private whisper, no, not with such friends
That thought them sure of you.

Cor. This last old man,

Whom with a cracked heart I have sent to Rome,
Loved me above the measure of a father ;
Nay, godded me, indeed. Their latest refuge
Was to send him ; for whose old love I have—
Though I show'd sourly to him—once more offered
The first conditions, which they did refuse
And cannot now accept, to grace him only
That thought he could do more. A very little
I have yielded to : fresh embassies and suits,
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter

Will I lend ear to.—[*Shout within*] Ha! what shout is this?

Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow
In the same time 't is made? I will not.—

Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, VOLUMNIA, leading Young MARCIUS, VALERIA, and Attendants.

My wife comes foremost; then the honoured mould

Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break!

Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.—

What is that curt'sy worth? or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn?—I melt, and am
not

Of stronger earth than others.—My mother bows,
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod: and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession, which
Great Nature cries, 'Deny not.'—Let the Volsces
Plough Rome, and harrow Italy; I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other kin.

Vir. My lord and husband !

Cor. These eyes are not the same I wore in
Rome.

Vir. The sorrow that delivers us thus changed,
Makes you think so.

Cor. Like a dull actor now,
I have forgot my part, and I am out,
Even to a full disgrace.—Best of my flesh,
Forgive my tyranny ; but do not say
For that, ‘ Forgive our Romans.’—O, a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge !
Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
I carried from thee, dear ; and my true lip
Hath virgined it e’er since.—You gods ! I prate,
And the most noble mother of the world
Leave unsaluted : sink, my knee, i’ the earth ;
[*Kneels.*

Of thy deep duty more impression show
Than that of common sons.

Vol. O, stand up blessed !
Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint,
I kneel before thee, and improperly
Show duty, as mistaken all this while
Between the child and parent. [*Kneels.*

Cor. What is this ?
Your knees to me ? to your corrected son ?

Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars ; then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun,
Murdering impossibility, to make
What cannot be, slight work.

Vol. Thou art my warrior ;
I help to frame thee. Do you know this lady ?

Cor. The noble sister of Publicola,
The moon of Rome ; chaste as the icicle,
That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple : dear Valeria !

Vol. This is a poor epitome of yours,
Which, by the interpretation of full time,
May show like all yourself.

Cor. The god of soldiers,
With the consent of supreme Jove, inform
Thy thoughts with nobleness; that thou may'st
prove

To shame invulnerable, and stick i' the wars
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,
And saving those that eye thee !

Vol. **Your knee, sirrah.**

Cor. That's my brave boy!

Vol. Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,
Are suitors to you.

Cor. I beseech you, peace ;

Or, if you'd ask, remember this before :
The things I have forsworn to grant may never
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics : tell me not
Wherein I seem unnatural : desire not
To allay my rages and revenges with
Your colder reasons.

Vol. O ! no more, no more !
You have said you will not grant us anything :
For we have nothing else to ask but that
Which you deny already : yet we will ask,
That, if we fail in our request, the blame
May hang upon your hardness. Therefore, hear us.

Cor. Aufidius, and you Volscres, mark ; for we'll
Hear nought from Rome in private.—Your request ?

Vol. Should we be silent and not speak, our
raiment

And state of bodies would bewray what life
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself,
How more unfortunate than all living women
Are we come hither : since that thy sight, which
should

Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with
comforts,

Constrains them weep, and shake with fear and
sorrow ;

Making the mother, wife, and child, to see
The son, the husband, and the father, tearing
His country's bowels out. And to poor we
Thine enmity's most capital : thou barr'st us
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort
That all but we enjoy ; for how can we,
Alas, how can we for our country pray,
Whereto we're bound, together with thy victory,
Whereto we're bound ? Alack, or we must lose
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person,
Our comfort in the country. We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win ; for either
thou

Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
With manacles thorough our streets, or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,
And bear the palm for having bravely shed
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,
I purpose not to wait on fortune till
These wars determine : if I cannot persuade thee
Rather to show a noble grace to both parts
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread—

Trust to 't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb,
That brought thee to this world.

Vir.

Ay, and on mine,

That brought you forth this boy, to keep your
name

Living to time.

Boy.

'A shall not tread on me :

I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

Cor. Not of a woman's tenderness to be,

Requires nor child nor woman's face to see.

I have sat too long.

[*Rising.*

Vol.

Nay, go not from us thus.

If it were so, that our request did tend

To save the Romans, thereby to destroy

The Volscies whom you serve, you might condemn

us

As poisonous of your honour : no ; our suit

Is, that you reconcile them : while the Volscies

May say, 'This mercy we have showed ;' the
Romans,

'This we received ;' and each in either side

Give the all-hail to thee, and cry, 'Be blessed

For making up this peace !' Thou know'st, great
son,

The end of war's uncertain : but this certain,

That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit

Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name
Whose repetition will be dogged with curses,
Whose chronicle thus writ :—‘The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wiped it out,
Destroyed his country, and his name remains
To the ensuing age abhorred.’ Speak to me, son !
Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,
To imitate the graces of the gods ;
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o’ the air,
And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt
That should but rive an oak. Why dost not speak ?
Think’st thou it honourable for a noble man
Still to remember wrongs ?—Daughter, speak you :
He cares not for your weeping.—Speak thou, boy :
Perhaps thy childishness will move him more
Than can our reasons.—There’s no man in the
world
More bound to’s mother ; yet here he lets me
prate,
Like one i’ the stocks.—Thou hast never in thy
life
Showed thy dear mother any courtesy ;
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has cluck’d thee to the wars, and safely home,
Loaden with honour. Say, my request’s unjust,
And spurn me back ; but, if it be not so,

Thou art not honest, and the gods will plague thee,
That thou restrain'st from me the duty which
To a mother's part belongs.—He turns away :
Down, ladies ; let us shame him with our knees.
To his surname Coriolanus 'longs more pride,
Than pity to our prayers. Down : an end ;
This is the last :—so we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours.—Nay, behold 'a
This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
Does reason our petition with more strength
Than thou hast to deny 't.—Come, let us go.
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;
His wife is in Corioli, and this child
Like him by chance.—Yet give us our despatch :
I am hushed until our city be a-fire,
And then I 'll speak a little.

[*After holding VOLUMNIA by the hands, in silence.*

Cor.

O mother, mother !

What have you done ? Behold, the heavens do
ope,

The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O, my mother, mother ! O,
You have won a happy victory to Rome ;
But, for your son,—believe it, O, believe it,—
Most dangerously you have with him prevailed,

If not most mortal to him. But let it come.—
Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you in my stead, say would you have heard
A mother less, or granted less, Aufidius?

Auf. I was moved withal.

Cor. I dare be sworn, you were :
And, sir, it is no little thing to make
Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,
What peace you'll make, advise me. For my
part,
I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you ; and pray
you,

Stand to me in this cause.—O mother ! wife !

Auf. [*Aside.*] I am glad thou 'st set thy mercy
and thy honour

At difference in thee : out of that I'll work
Myself a former fortune.

[*The ladies make signs to CORIOLANUS.*]

Cor. [*To VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, &c.*] Ay, by-
and-by ;

But we will drink together ; and you shall bear :
A better witness back than words, which we,
On like conditions, will have counter-sealed.
Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve
To have a temple built you : all the swords

In Italy, and her confederate arms,
Could not have made this peace.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—Rome. A Public Place.

Enter MENENIUS and SICINIUS.

Men. See you yond coign o' the Capitol, yond
cornerstone ?

Sic. Why, what of that ?

Men. If it be possible for you to displace it with
your little finger, there is some hope the ladies of
Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him.
But I say, there is no hope in 't. Our throats are
sentenced, and stay upon execution.

Sic. Is 't possible, that so short a time can alter
the condition of a man ?

Men. There is differency between a grub and a
butterfly ; yet your butterfly was a grub. This
Marcius is grown from man to dragon : he has
wings ; he's more than a creeping thing.

Sic. He loved his mother dearly.

Men. So did he me ; and he no more remembers
his mother now, than an eight-year-old horse. The
tartness of his face sours ripe grapes. When he

walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading. He is able to pierce a corslet with his eye ; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done, is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity, and a heaven to throne in.

Sic. Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

Men. I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother shall bring from him : there is no more mercy in him, than there is milk in a male tiger ; that shall our poor city find : and all this is 'long of you.

Sic. The gods be good unto us !

Men. No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them ; and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your house.

The Plebeians have got your fellow-tribune,
And hale him up and down ; all swearing, if
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,
They'll give him death by inches.

Enter another Messenger.

Sic. What's the news?

Mess. Good news, good news!—The ladies have prevailed,

The Volscians are dislodged, and Marcius gone.

A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,

No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

Sic. Friend,

Art thou certain this is true? is it most certain?

Mess. As certain as I know the sun is fire.

Where have you lurked, that you make doubt of it?

Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide,

As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you!

[Trumpets and hautboys sounded, and drums beaten all together. Shouting also within.]

The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, and fifes,

Tabors, and cymbals, and the shouting Romans,

Make the sun dance. Hark you!

[Shouting again.]

Men. This is good news.

I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia

Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,

A city full; of tribunes, such as you,

A sea and land full. You have prayed well to-day :

This morning for ten thousand of your throats
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy !

[*Shouting and music.*

Sic. First, the gods bless you for your tidings ;
next,

Accept my thankfulness.

Mess. Sir, we have all

Great cause to give great thanks.

Sic. They are near the city !

Mess. Almost at point to enter.

Sic. We will meet them,

And help the joy. [Going.

Enter the Ladies, accompanied by Senators, Patricians, and People. They pass over the stage.

1 *Sen.* Behold our patroness, the life of Rome !
Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,
And make triumphant fires ; strew flowers before
them :

Unshout the noise that banished Marcius ;
Repeal him with the welcome of his mother ;
Cry,—Welcome, ladies, welcome !—

All. Welcome, ladies, welcome !

[*A flourish with drums and trumpets. Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—Antium. A Public Place.

Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with Attendants.

Auf. Go tell the lords of the city, I am here :
Deliver them this paper ; having read it,
Bid them repair to the market-place ; where I,
Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,
Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse
The city ports by this hath entered, and
Intends to appear before the people, hoping
To purge himself with words. Despatch.

[Exeunt Attendants.]

Enter three or four Conspirators of AUFIDIUS' faction.

Most welcome !

1 *Con.* How is it with our general ?

Auf. Even so

As with a man by his own alms empoisoned,
And with his charity slain.

2 *Con.* Most noble sir,

If you do hold the same intent wherein
You wished us parties, we'll deliver you
Of your great danger.

Auf.

Sir, I cannot tell :

We must proceed as we do find the people.

3 *Con.* The people will remain uncertain whilst
'Twixt you there's difference ; but the fall of either
Makes the survivor heir of all.

Auf.

I know it ;

And my pretext to strike at him admits
A good construction. I raised him, and I pawned
Mine honour for his truth : who being so heightened,
He watered his new plants with dews of flattery,
Seducing so my friends ; and, to this end,
He bowed his nature, never known before
But to be rough, unswayable, and free.

3 *Con.* Sir, his stoutness,
When he did stand for consul, which he lost
By lack of stooping,—

Auf.

That I would have spoke of.

Being banished fôr't, he came unto my hearth ;
Presented to my knife his throat : I took him ;
Made him joint-servant with me ; gave him way
In all his own desires ; nay, let him choose
Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,
My best and freshest men ; served his design-
ments

In mine own person ; help to reap the fame
Which he did end all his ; and took some pride
To do myself this wrong : till, at the last,

I seemed his follower, not partner ; and
He waged me with his countenance as if
I had been mercenary.

1 *Con.* So he did, my lord,—
The army marvelled at it ; and, in the last,
When he had carried Rome, and that we looked
For no less spoil than glory,—

Auf. There was it,
For which my sinews shall be stretched upon
him.

At a few drops of women's rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action : therefore shall he die,
And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark !

*[Drums and trumpets sound, with great
shouts of the People.]*

1 *Con.* Your native town you entered like a
post,
And had no welcomes home ; but he returns,
Splitting the air with noise.

2 *Con.* And patient fools,
Whose children he hath slain, their base throats
tear

With giving him glory.

3 *Con.* Therefore, at your vantage,
Ere he express himself, or move the people

With what he would say, let him feel your sword,
Which we will second. When he lies along,
After your way his tale pronounced shall bury
His reasons with his body.

Auf. Say no more :
Here come the lords.

Enter the Lords of the City.

Lords. You are most welcome home.

Auf. I have not deserved it.
But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused
What I have written to you ?

Lords. We have.

1 Lord. And grieve to hear 't.
What faults he made before the last, I think
Might have found easy fines ; but there to end
Where he was to begin, and give away
The benefit of our levies, answering us
With our own charge, making a treaty where
There was a yielding,—this admits no excuse.

Auf. He approaches : you shall hear him.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, with drums and colours ; a
crowd of Citizens with him.*

Cor. Hail, lords ! I am returned your soldier ;
No more infected with my country's love

Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting
Under your great command. You are to know,
That prosperously I have attempted, and
With bloody passage led your wars even to
The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought
home

Do more than counterpoise, a full third part,
The charges of the action. We've made peace
With no less honour to the Antiates
Than shame to the Romans; and we here deliver,
Subscribed by the consuls and patricians,
Together with the seal o' the senate, what
We have compounded on.

Auf. Read it not, noble lords;
But tell the traitor in the high'st degree
He hath abused your powers.

Cor. Traitor!—How now!—

Auf. Ay, traitor, Marcius.

Cor. Marcius!

Auf. Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius. Dost thou
think

I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n
name

Coriolanus in Corioli?—

You lords and heads of the state, perfidiously
He has betrayed your business, and given up,

For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,—
I say, your city,—to his wife and mother ;
Breaking his oath and resolution, like
A twist of rotten silk ; never admitting
Council o' the war, but at his nurse's tears
He whined and roared away your victory,
That pages blushed at him, and men of heart
Looked wondering each at other.

Cor. Hear'st thou, Mars ?

Auf. Name not the god, thou boy of tears.

Cor. Ha !

Auf. No more.

Cor. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. ' Boy ' ! O slave—
Pardon me, lords, 't is the first time that ever
I was forced to scold. Your judgments, my grave
lords,

Must give this cur the lie : and his own notion—
Who wears my stripes impressed upon him, that
Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
To thrust the lie unto him.

1 Lord. Peace, both, and hear me speak.

Cor. Cut me to pieces, Volscies ; men and lads,
Stain all your edges on me.—' Boy ' ! False hound !
If you have writ your annals true, 't is there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I

Fluttered your Volscians in Corioli :

Alone I did it.—‘ Boy ’]

Auf. Why, noble lords,
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,
Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,
‘Fore your own eyes and ears ?

All the Conspirators. Let him die for’t.

Citizens. Tear him to pieces : do it presently.
He killed my son ;—my daughter ;—he killed my
cousin Marcus ;—he killed my father.—

2 Lord. Peace, ho !—no outrage :—peace !
The man is noble, and his fame folds in
This orb o’ the earth. His last offences to us
Shall have judicious hearing.—Stand, Aufidius,
And trouble not the peace.

Cor. O ! that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,
To use my lawful sword !

Auf. Insolent villain ! :

All Con. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him !

[AUFIDIUS and the Conspirators draw, and
kill CORIOLANUS, who falls : AUFIDIUS stands
on his body.]

Lords. Hold, hold, hold, hold !

Auf. My noble masters, hear me speak.

1 Lord. O Tullus,—

2 *Lord.* Thou hast done a deed whereat valour
will weep.

3 *Lord.* Tread not upon him.—Masters all, be
quiet.—

Put up your swords.

Auf. My lords, when you shall know—as in this
rage,

Provoked by him, you cannot—the great danger
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours
To call me to your senate, I'll deliver
Myself your loyal servant, or endure
Your heaviest censure.

1 *Lord.* Bear from hence his body,
And mourn you for him. Let him be regarded
As the most noble corse that ever herald
Did follow to his urn.

2 *Lord.* His own impatience
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.
Let's make the best of it.

Auf. My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow.—Take him up :—
Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers ; I'll be one.—
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully ;
Trail your steel pikes.—Though in this city he
Hath widowed and unchilded many a one,

Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.—

Assist. [*Exeunt, bearing the body of* CORIO-
 LANUS. *A dead march sounded.*

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